

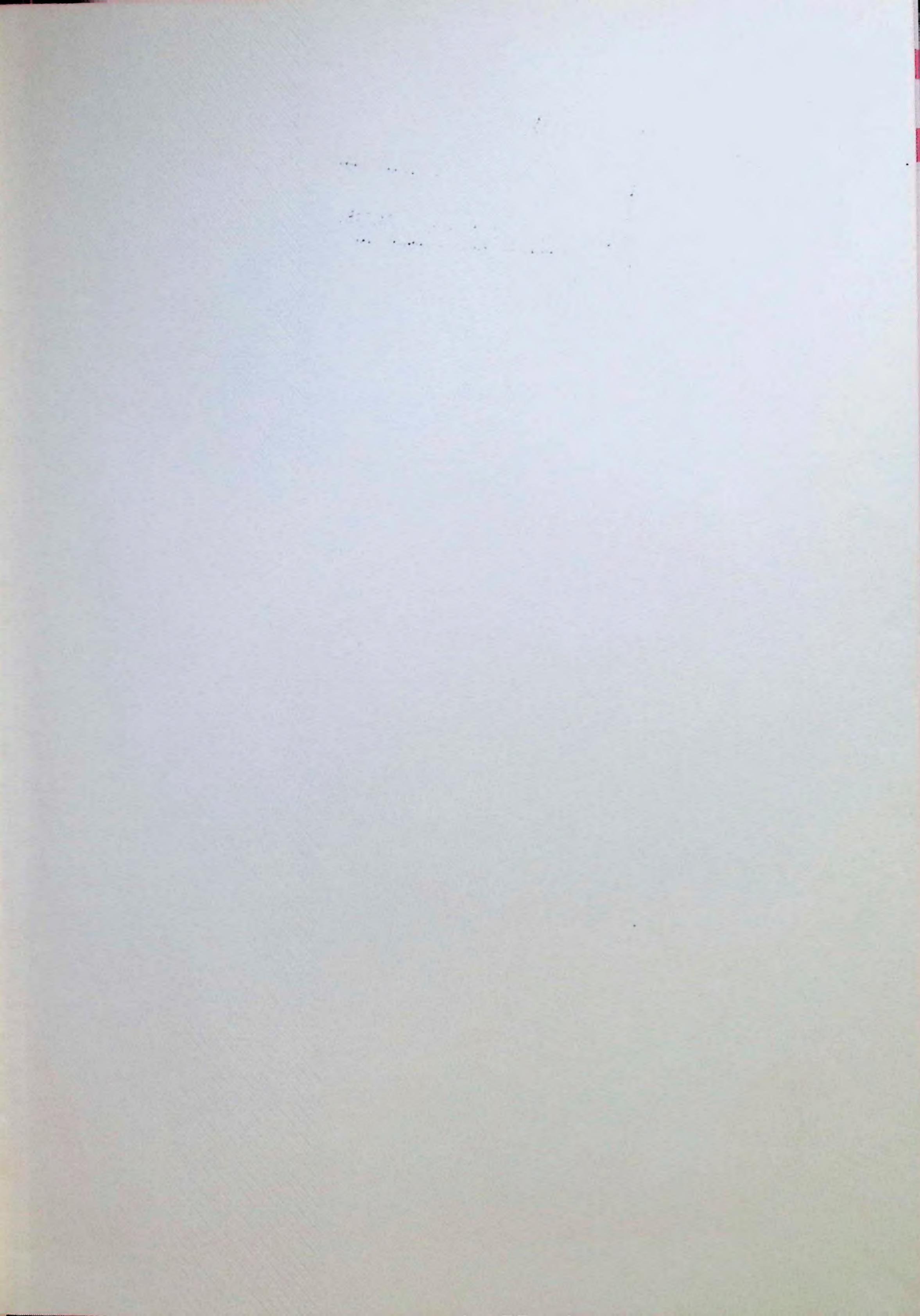
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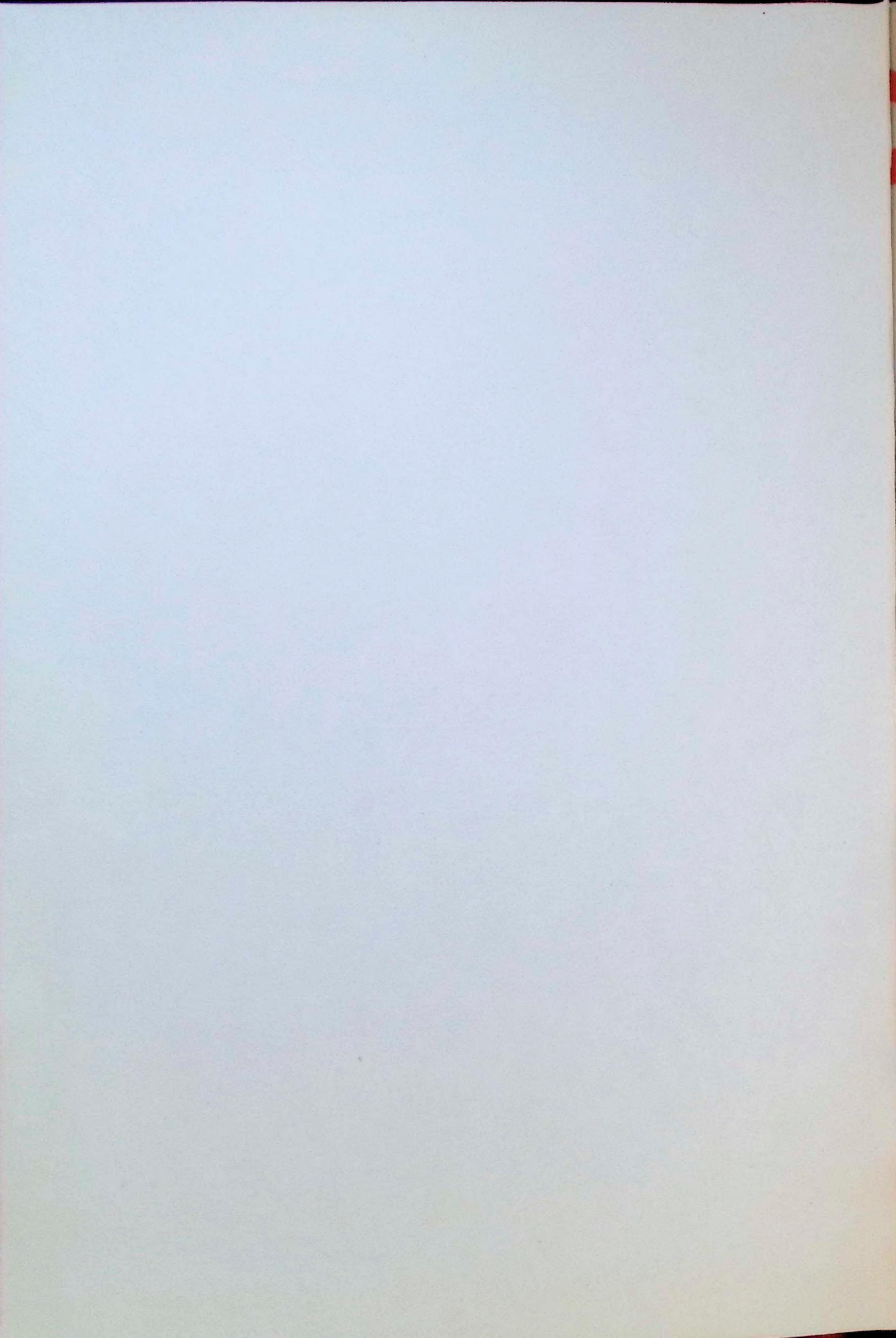
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# MALEGITE INDIANS OF NEW BRUNSWICK

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# THE MALECITE INDIANS OF NEW BRUNSWICK

By  
WILSON D. WALLIS   
and  
RUTH SAWTELL WALLIS

Bulletin No. 148  
*Anthropological Series No. 40*

*Issued under the authority of*  
THE MINISTER OF NORTHERN AFFAIRS AND  
NATIONAL RESOURCES  
OTTAWA  
1957

Price: 75 cents

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# THE MALECITE INDIANS OF NEW BRUNSWICK

## INTRODUCTION

Along the St. John River in New Brunswick, from Fredericton to Perth, live a thousand Indians of the Malecite tribe. The present-day reserves and small settlements are within the focus, although not at the centre, of old Malecite territory, which once extended as far north as Riviere du Loup on the St. Lawrence and in some places westward into the State of Maine. Of Eastern Woodland culture, they speak the language of the Algonkin and dwell between tribes of similar language and ways of life. To the southwest across the United States border are the Passamaquoddy, generally considered an offshoot of the Malecite, separated mainly by political accident.<sup>1</sup>

Beyond them, the Penobscot, on the river bearing their name, inhabit Oldtown, above Bangor. Apart from the Malecite strip in western New Brunswick, the 5,000 Indians of the Maritime Provinces and the southern shore of Gaspe Peninsula are Micmac. Of the four closely related tribes, least is known about the Malecite.<sup>2</sup> To obtain data on this tribe for comparison with certain phases of Micmac culture we spent ten days in July 1953 at Tobique, the most northerly reserve, near Perth, N.B.<sup>3</sup> More than a dozen informants, cordial and co-operative, gave us information concerning an earlier, though not wholly aboriginal, stage of their society. Because of the dearth of knowledge about Malecite culture, we feel that the rather meagre results of our study should be recorded. We offer first a summary of published accounts.

## ACCOUNTS OF THE MALECITE

### 1606-1900

Seventeenth century travellers and missionaries to Acadia, as well as anthropologists of more recent times, had little interest in the Indians of the St. John River. As a result we have been left no treasury of Malecite data comparable with that found concerning the Micmac in the *Jesuit Relations* and the books by Lescarbot, Denys, and LeClercq.

Assuming, as do many scholars, that the Malecite were descendants of the Etchemin, they were visited in 1608 by Marc Lescarbot and by Father Biard. Like many later writers, Lescarbot frequently speaks of the Indians of Acadia without tribal or regional designation; most of his

<sup>1</sup> Nearby Indians and anthropologists recognize this unity. Micmac refer to Passamaquoddy as "those Maliseet who live in Maine."

<sup>2</sup> Most of the material gathered by the late E. T. Adney is in manuscript deposited in the Peabody Museum, Salem, Mass. We are greatly indebted to the Museum's Director, Mr. Ernest S. Dodge, for an opportunity to consult these papers.

<sup>3</sup> The field work of W. D. Wallis was supported by grants from the American Philosophical Society and from the Graduate School and the Department of Anthropology, University of Minnesota.

descriptions are of Micmac in the Annapolis basin or adjacent regions. The chief mission of the Recollet Fathers during their first sojourn in Acadia (1619-24) was on the St. John River. From 1632 onward, the Jesuits "announced the faith to the Etchemins," at least to those who came to trade near the Riviere du Loup mission.<sup>1</sup> The Recollets returned in 1671 and established a mission on the St. John River. From there, during the period 1740-63, Malecite bands led by Father Germain, a priest as fiery as the more famous Le Loutre, went to Nova Scotia to join their neighbouring tribesmen as French allies against the besieged British at Annapolis Royal.

Participation by Malecite bands in the various wars of the eighty-year British-French struggle for North America was indirectly responsible for the best account of their culture, the one by John Gyles (Giles), an English boy taken captive in the Pemaquid raid of 1689. Among the brief items of anthropological interest recorded between Gyles' day and the present, those by Levinge, a young soldier from England in the early nineteenth century, are most informative. Malecite culture, as described in these and other fragmentary sources, appears to have been a slight variant of the Penobscot-Micmac pattern.

### Material Culture

We know little about aboriginal Malecite clothing, accoutrements, or adornment. Seventeenth century warriors from the St. John River were equipped with shields, which covered the entire body, and with wooden clubs "like croziers."<sup>2</sup> At the end of the eighteenth century, women wore peaked hoods "in the form of a grenadier's cap," the characteristic winter headgear of northern tribes from the Atlantic to the Eastern Dakota near the Mississippi. These hoods, ornamented with silver and beads,<sup>3</sup> served until 1914 as the ceremonial "squaw cap" of Abenaki women. By 1835 face-painting and tattooing had been discontinued.

The wigwam of 1835 is thus described: "When about to make a permanent camp, or to remain for any length of time in one particular spot, great neatness may be observed in the interior economy of their wigwams. The floor is covered, for a space extending round the whole circumference, with the ends of the branches of the silver fir, broken short off and placed one over another, slanting toward the centre. In the midst is the fire, and four laths accurately determine the finish of the divan and the commencement of the kitchen department. In their cuisine they have made but little progress; and a stone trough, or an old frying-pan, is the utmost limit to which their culinary implements extend . . . One of the chiefs, Old Louis Bear . . . at the particular request of one of Their Excellencies, built a stone house of two stories. When completed, he requested that the governor would come and see what he had done. He had built a

<sup>1</sup> LeClercq. I: 199-201, 277; II: 103.

<sup>2</sup> Lescarbot, 268.

<sup>3</sup> Campbell, 287.



The St. John  
and the Tobique  
at  
Maliseet Point,  
N.B.

house, and had laid out a great deal of money in the construction of it; but on a close inspection, it was discovered that he had built his wigwam inside."<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the seventeenth century, when there was a scarcity of the White Man's kettles, meat was put into a birch-bark container and packed against its sides. The vessel was then filled with water, and from time to time hot stones were dropped into it to keep the water boiling. When the flesh of game was removed from the bones, it was smoked and then salted; thus it was preserved for a long time. Salmon and other fish, bear, beaver, muskrat, and moose were prized foods. Tortoise eggs were sought by thrusting a stick intermittently into a sandy place; boiled, these eggs were considered a delicacy. The fire-drill consisted of two sticks of different degrees of hardness. The notched one, of softer wood, was held parallel to the ground, between the knees, and the harder stick was then inserted into the notch and twirled.

### Hunting

Winter hunting was conducted by blood relatives in small groups of from eight to ten. Travelling by canoe, they left the craft at the place

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<sup>1</sup> Levinge, 119-20, 122-3.

of debarkation, wandered through the woods after often scanty game animals, and in the spring returned to stream and canoes. Cadillac (1692) considered the Malecite well-made men and good hunters. Gyles states that the Malecite believed that the beaver normally had two young ones in a litter. However, he says that he saw five and seven "in a matrix." The Indians think it a strange thing to find so many in a litter; and they assert that when it so happens, the dam kills all but four.

In autumn, bears were sometimes taken inside their dens. To honour the slain beast they would place it within the wigwam, while an old woman and a captive who shook their hands and bodies as in a dance and sang *wegage oh nelo woh*, "Fat is my eating", would stand outside. Sometimes they would chase a moose into a river, where they could easily kill it. Before a moose feast, the flesh was hung on a scaffold in a large wigwam. In 1689 men sought omens for success in hunting through the medium of the sweat bath. They believed this ceremony bettered their prospects.

"They prepared hot stones, and laying them in a heap, they made a small hut covered with skins and mats; then in the dark night two of the powwows went into this hot house with a large vessel of water, which at times they poured on those hot rocks which raised a thick steam, so that a third Indian was obliged to stand without, and lift up a mat to give it vent when they were near suffocation. There was an old squaw who was kind to captives . . . to whom I manifested an earnest desire to see their management. She told me that if they knew of my being there they would kill me and that when she was a girl she had known young persons to be taken away by a hairy man and therefore she would not advise me to go, lest the hairy man should carry me away. . . I went within three or four feet of the hot house, for it was very dark, and heard strange noises and yellings such as I had not heard before. At times the Indian who tended without would lift up the mat and a steam would issue which looked like fire. I lay there for two or three hours. . .

"[The powwows] said they had very likely signs of success but no real ones as at other times."

One afternoon an Indian who had fired at a moose and missed called out to it, "I will try to fetch you back for all your haste!" That night wigwams were pitched on an island in the river near the spot where the moose had disappeared into the woods, and the Indians powwowed the greater part of the night. In the morning there was the track of a moose around the wigwam, "though we did not see or taste it."<sup>1</sup>

Hides of small animals (e.g., otter and rabbit) were opened only at the hind leg, stripped off whole, and then drawn over a flat piece of wood. This method was used at least as early as 1857.<sup>2</sup> Like the Micmac, they inserted a tube of three telescoped wild-goose feathers into the incised leg, inflated the skin, and rolled it back. The Micmac also used this European-introduced method in skinning deer. In 1911 a Malecite stated

<sup>1</sup> Gyles, 35-38.

<sup>2</sup> Shove.

to W. D. Wallis that this was an insult to the animal and that boys were whipped for thus treating rabbits.<sup>1</sup>

### Agriculture

At the end of the seventeenth century Europeans saw corn and pumpkins growing in the permanent spring and summer settlements close to the St. John River.<sup>2</sup> The proper time to plant corn was "when the maple leaf is as big as a squirrel's foot."

Gyles describes the planting after the winter hunters had returned to Meductic, or Aucpaque: "We planted corn and after planting, went fishing, and to look and dig roots till the corn was fit to weed. After weeding we took a second tour on the same errand, then returned to hill the corn. After hilling, we went some distance from the fort and field up the river, to take salmon and other fish, which we dried for food; where we continued until the corn was filled with milk; some of it we dried then, and some as it ripened. To dry corn when in milk, they gather it in large kettles and boil it on the ears till it is pretty hard, then shell it from the cob with a clam shell and dry it on bark in the sun. When it is thoroughly dry, a kernel is no bigger than a pea, and would keep for years. When it is boiled again, it swells as large as when on the ear and tastes incomparably sweeter than other corn. When we had gathered our corn and dried it in the way already described, we put some into Indian barns; that is, in holes lined and covered with bark and then with dirt. The rest we carried up the river upon our next winter's hunting."

Between corn harvest and the time of plentiful game, Malecite subsisted on fish, wild grapes, and roots, "which," says their White captive, "was hard living for me."

### Treatment of Injuries

Frozen limbs were treated with an application of balsam, prepared by boiling Canada fir in a clam shell. Small hoops similar to snowshoes were made and were fastened to frozen feet. Gyles, who was thus treated and equipped, says that as a result of these measures he was able to follow his master on the winter hunt, and a year later "hardly a trace of injury could be seen."

Red ochre was applied to stab-wounds.<sup>3</sup>

### Water Transportation

Early writers give no detailed descriptions of canoes or rafts. Gyles mentions canoes and refers to a raft made in winter in order to cross a stretch of open water. A dug-out canoe is described by Shove as "a hollow log open at each end and low enough in the middle for a man to stand in

<sup>1</sup> Wallis, *Micmac*, 40.

<sup>2</sup> Cadillac, 1692; Gyles, 1689-95.

<sup>3</sup> Levinge, 169.

it without swamping it, provided he remained there." The favourite and almost ubiquitous craft in this woodland area was the birch-bark canoe. A canoe was sometimes given a personal name, for example, "Waptook" (Wild Goose).<sup>1</sup> The profile of the Malecite canoe closely resembled that of the Penobscot but lacked the high middle elevation and bulging characteristic of Micmac craft. The earliest dated specimen known is a model presented in 1803 to the Peabody Museum of Salem, Massachusetts.<sup>2</sup> In 1900 Adney, an eye-witness, described canoe-making in sufficient detail to permit comparison with contemporary processes among Penobscot and Micmac.<sup>3</sup> His account, not available in most libraries, is reproduced here in part:

The canoe-builder, Peter Joe, while hunting for suitable bark, "went from tree to tree," chipping "a piece of bark from each, near the butt, so as not to spoil a possible good piece." On one tree the bark was too thin, on another the "eyes" were too numerous and too large. In some "the bark was prime, but the trunk was neither straight, nor tall, nor large, nor free from knots." After clearing away the undergrowth on one side of a tree he "felled a sapling about as big as a man's leg," cut off "a piece five or six feet long and laid this upon the ground close to the butt" of the chosen tree. The sapling was placed so as to prevent the tree when it fell "from burying itself in the soft moss . . . It fell . . . exactly where the Indian intended. The sapling at the butt, and the limbs of the tree . . . at the tip held the trunk clear of the ground by several inches . . . The Indian, with his hunting-knife, made a cut encircling the butt, and another around the other end, connecting them with a straight cut along the top. Lifting the edges carefully along the entire length of the cut, and gradually working with our hands, in a short while the fine yellow bark, in one sheet, eighteen feet long and over three feet wide, and without a blemish, was freed and fell to the ground. Peter Joe built a fire of scraps of birch-bark, and then warming the sheet over the fire to make it pliant, we rolled it up as one would a carpet, and lashed it together with bands of cedar-bark, or 'Injun rope,' with an additional sling for carrying over the shoulders . . . We found a smaller tree, which we peeled in like manner." At the camp "Peter placed the larger roll in the river, weighting it down with stones, and anchoring it securely to the shore with 'Injun rope.' . . The sheathing, or bark, of the canoe is put directly into a shape as near the finished form as possible, and the ribs, which are bent beforehand, each to its right form, are placed in afterwards . . . The woodwork of our canoe was to be of clear, straight-grained cedar . . .

"While the bark was soaking, Peter split the cedar log, and with his 'crooked-knife' whittled out two strips an inch and a half square and about sixteen feet long. These . . . the 'gunwales,' he lashed together at the ends with spruce roots, and braced them apart like two bows, with five rock-

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<sup>1</sup> Levinge, 169.

<sup>2</sup> Hadlock and Dodge, Plate facing p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Penobscot: Hadlock and Dodge; Speck and Hadlock, *Penobscot Man*. Micmac: Wallis, *Micmac*, 42-50.

maple cross-bars, the middle one being thirty inches long . . . The ribs were taken out of the best part of the cedar. They must be split with their flat sides parallel with the bark. If taken with the edges toward the bark across the grain, they will not bear the strain of bending. The ribs, to the number of forty or fifty, and about as wide as one's hand and half an inch thick, carefully smoothed by means of the crooked-knife, were soaked for several days in the river, and then bent, two at a time, hot water being poured over them to increase their pliancy. . . . Each pair of ribs is bent beforehand to the exact form of the finished canoe, every other pair having a different curve, as though the builder saw in his mind's eye the finished form . . .

"Here is shown the experience of the canoe-builder. After the ribs are bent to the right shape, loops of cedar-bark are put around them to keep them in place; then they are laid in the sun to become perfectly dry, when the bands may be taken off and the ribs will retain their shape. While the ribs were seasoning, Peter levelled off a piece of ground near the camp twenty feet long and a yard wide . . . Although to the eye the 'bed', as it is termed, appeared level, it was about two inches higher in the middle than at the ends. This raising of the middle is . . . necessary. Sometimes, instead of bare ground being used for the bed, a platform of boards is used, whereby the middle can be raised . . . with less trouble. The gunwales were now placed upon the bed, and the two ends supported upon pegs two inches high.

"Then twenty to thirty stakes, two to three feet long, were driven into the ground around the gunwales, at intervals of about a foot. When this was done, every stake was pulled up and put aside, each beside its hole. The gunwales were next taken up, and the bark unrolled and spread out on the bed, with the yellow or outer side down. The gunwales were then put back on top of the bark and weighted with heavy stones . . . The bark had now to be bent upright around the frame . . . To do this, little V-shaped slices or gores had to be taken out every foot or so, along each side of the bark; and then without difficulty, each flap was bent up, and as this was done each stake was slipped back into place to hold it there. Next the gunwales were raised (the bark remaining flat on the ground), and under the end of each cross-bar was placed a post. Two eighteen-foot strips of cedar were pushed inside the stakes and lashed through the bark to the gunwales, thus securing the edges of the bark firmly. The next thing was to place the canoe upside down on two 'horses' and round off the ends, either by the eye or with the help of a pair of wooden dividers. A thin bent stick of wood was slipped in between the edges of the bark, bow and stern, and sewn over and over with roots. The canoe was then turned over on the grass, and the larger holes and cracks were pasted up with strips of bark and a 'pitch' made of certain parts of pine-resin and grease. The inside was then lined completely with very thin strips of cedar running lengthwise, and the ribs, which were by this time as dry as a bone, were driven one by one into place, commencing at the ends and ending amidship. A narrow oval board was set into the two ends, which had been stuffed with shavings, and a long strip of cedar

nailed on top of the gunwales, and lashed at the ends. The cracks outside were then plastered with pitch, which practically finished the canoe, upon which Peter Joe had worked three weeks. Before the canoe was placed in the river it was partially filled with water, which immediately disclosed some holes that had escaped observation, and these were plastered with pitch . . . 'Winter-bark,' in being stripped from the tree, brings up some of the under bark, and this after a little while turns a rich red. This surface, being somewhat rough, must be scraped off by wetting the bark; but usually portions of the red color may be left on, in the form of a decoration several inches wide below the gunwale, like a necklace or garland around the entire canoe. Often, on the finest canoes, some figure, as a star or an animal, or a bold Indian hunter with tomahawk, may be seen, together with the maker's mark or name."<sup>1</sup>

## Phases of Social Life

### Marriage

Concerning marriage, Gyles says that should a young man decide to take a wife, his relatives and a Jesuit would advise him about a suitable girl. "He goes into a wigwam where she is and looks at her. If he likes her appearance, he tosses a stick or a chip into her lap, which she takes, and with a reserved side look views the person who sent it, yet handles the chip with admiration, as though she wondered whence it came. If she likes him, she throws the chip to him with a modest smile. If she dislikes him, she, with a surly countenance, throws the chip aside and he comes no more there."

To be much sought after as a wife, a marriageable girl should be able to make moccasins, string snowshoes, manufacture birch-bark vessels and fibre bags (*monoodah*), sew the bark strips of canoes, and, of course, cook. The parents of such an accomplished girl expected to obtain a son-in-law who was a good hunter. A well-equipped young man of 1689 owned a gun and ammunition, canoe, spear, hatchet, bag, crooked-knife, mirror and paint, pipe, tobacco, and a wooden bowl for playing the dice game. Property acquired by the husband during the first year of marriage belonged to the wife's parents. "If," Gyles adds, "a child is born within a year and nine months they are thought to be very forward and libidinous." This statement implies a probationary year of residence with the girl's family before consummation of marriage, a custom among Micmac in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>2</sup> After the death of a wife the husband's "relations consult together and choose a squaw (doubtless a widow), and send her to the widower, and if he likes her, he takes her to be his wife; if not, he sends her back, and the relations choose and send till they find one he approves of."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Adney, "The Building of a Birch Canoe".

<sup>2</sup> Wallis, *Micmac*, 240-42.

<sup>3</sup> Gyles, 32.

### *Care of Children and the Aged*

According to Gyles, children were not neglected. After they had outgrown the cradleboard, they ran about naked and rolled in the mud. In 1835, long after adults had abandoned native weapons, small children were remarkably good shots with bow and arrow.<sup>1</sup> The aged, as a rule, were well cared for; however, Gyles notes that "a particularly cruel old woman and her twelve-year-old grandson" were abandoned to die by a group when they broke camp.

### *Treatment of Captives*

For a captured enemy they had little or no mercy. Occasionally an Indian master made a payment of corn or blankets to spare his captive from torture. Such was John Gyles' lot. At Meductic, however, he witnessed the sufferings of his fellow-captives. Four men after seizing a prisoner by his hands and feet, swung him up high, and then let him fall to the ground. This was repeated, during what was called "a dance" around a wigwan, a distance of thirty to forty feet. Only two men participated in the torture of a boy. In another method of torture they held the captive by the middle, head down, and shook him "till one would think his bowels would shake out of his mouth." Or the victim was taken by the hair of the head and, after being made to stoop forward, he was struck on back and shoulders until blood gushed from mouth and nose. Once an old shrivelled squaw threw a shovelful of hot embers on the captive's bosom. When he cried out, the bystanders laughed and shouted: "What a brave action our grandmother has done!"

Sometimes they tortured with whips. "My unfortunate brother who was taken with me, after about three years of captivity, deserted with another Englishman . . . and was retaken . . . They were both tortured at a stake by fire for some time; then their noses and ears were cut off, and they made to eat them. After this they were burnt to death at the stake, the Indians declaring they would serve all deserters in the same way. Thus they divert themselves in their dances".<sup>2</sup>

In 1745 Captain William Pote, a prisoner of the Huron, was taken to Quebec. His captors, while travelling up the St. John River, stopped at the Malecite village of Aucpaque. "At this place ye Squaws came done to ye edge of ye River, Dancing and Behaving themselves in ye most Brutish and Indecent manner and taking up prisoners by ye arms, one Squaw on each Side of a prisoner, they led us up to their Village and placed themselves in a Large Circle Round us. After they had Gat all prepared for their Dance, they made us sit down In a Small Circle, about 18 Inches assunder and began their frolick, Dancing Round us and striking of us in ye face with English Scalps, yt caused ye Blood to Issue from our mouths and

<sup>1</sup> Levinge, 115; Gyles, 32.

<sup>2</sup> Gyles, 22.

Noses, In a Very Great and plentiful manner, and Tangled their hands in our hair, and knocked our heads together with all their Strength and Vehemence, and when they was tired of this Exercise, they would take us by the hair and some by ye Ears, and standing behind us, oblige us to keep our Necks Strong so as to bear their weight hanging by our hair and Ears. In this manner, they thumped us In ye Back and Sides, with their knees and feet, and Twitched our hair and Ears to such a Degree, that I am Incapable to express it, and ye others that was Dancing Round if they saw any man falter, and did not hold up his Neck, they Dached ye Scalps In our faces with such Violence, yt every man endeavored to bear them hanging by their hair in this manner, Rather than to have a Double Punishment . . . their frolick lasted about two hours and a half."<sup>1</sup>

### *Amusements*

The gentler pleasure that was most popular among Malecite was *altestagen*, their version of the gambling game played with bowl, dice, and counting-sticks by woodland tribes from Nova Scotia to Minnesota.

Malecite, like Micmac, it seems, made the bowls from a burl which they believed was filled with magic power. Gyles refers to "knot-bowls" and says that every man of "good estate" possessed one. Play might run uninterrupted for days and nights, and often men staked all their possessions. A set of bowl, dice, and counters collected at the Tobique Reserve about 1900 is described as follows: ". . . set of six disks of caribou bone marked on the flat side; a platter of curly maple cut across the grain, 11½ inches in diameter; and fifty-two wooden counting sticks about 8 inches in length, four being broader than the others and of different shapes . . . The game was called *altestagen*, and was played by two persons, one of whom places the counting sticks in a pile together . . . The stones are placed at random in the plate, which is held in both hands and struck sharply on the ground so as to make the stones fly into the air and turn before landing in the plate . . . A player continues as long as he scores, taking counters from the pile of sticks according to his throw.

"When the pile is exhausted, each having obtained part, the game is continued until one wins them all. Three plain sticks count one point. The three carved sticks count each four points, or twelve plain sticks. The snake-like stick is kept to the last.

"It is equal to three plain sticks, and a throw that counts three is necessary to take it."<sup>2</sup>

This is very similar to the Micmac game of *waltes*, still avidly played in 1911-12, but which in 1950 was almost forgotten. Micmac men were diligent players, but usually the equipment belonged to the women.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in W. C. Raymond, *Glimpses of the Past. History of The River St. John A.D. 1606-1787*, 82-83. St. John, N.B., 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Culin, 1902; 49-50.

<sup>3</sup> Wallis, *Micmac*, 195-200.

Swimming and diving were sports as well as sanitary measures; perhaps for the latter reason the Malecite forced John Gyles to join them in the river, although he had stated that he could not swim. After he sank in fifteen feet of water, a young girl dived in and brought him up by the hair.

### *Feasts*

Social feasts were given by a host who boiled four or five kettles of fish, meat, corn or beans, or sometimes a hasty pudding of pounded corn, and then sent out, Gyles says, a messenger to each wigwam door, who exclaimed, "*Kuh menscoorebahl!* I come to conduct you to a feast." The man within asks whether he must take a spoon or a knife in the dish which he carries with him. Two or three young men are selected to scoop up and apportion the food to each man, according to the size of his family at home. "This is done with the utmost exactness." After they have eaten, a young fellow stands outside the entrance and calls, "*Mensecommook*, Come and fetch." Each squaw goes to her husband and takes what he has left, carries it home, and she and her children eat it. No married woman or youth under twenty is allowed at a feast; old widowed squaws and captive men may sit at the entrance. After the men have finished eating, they stay on in the wigwam and tell stories of their war process, "something comical," and hunting exploits. The old men give maxims of prudence and grave counsel to the young men. No one speaks out of turn, and only one speaks at a time. After every man has told his story, someone rises, sings a feast song, and others follow suit "alternately as the company sees fit."

On the eve of a war party a special dog feast was held. "They kill a number of dogs, burn off their hair, and cut them in pieces, leaving only

Mrs. Charles Nicolas



one dog's head whole. The rest of the flesh they boil and make a fine feast of it. Then the dog's head that was left whole is scorched till the nose and lips are shrunk from the teeth, leaving them bare and grinning. This done, they fasten it on a stick, and the Indian who proposed to be chief of the expedition, takes the head into his hand and sings a warlike song, in which he mentions the town they design to attack, and the principal man in it, threatening that in a few days he will carry that man's head and scalp in the same manner . . ."<sup>1</sup>

### *Relations with Other Tribes*

Knowledge of Malecite relations with other tribes comes from accounts written primarily about other peoples. Their attitude toward adjacent Algonkin tribes varied from time to time. Aromas of boiling dog might indicate a small raid to avenge insult on a settlement of Micmac or of Penobscot,<sup>2</sup> or mark the eve of a joint expedition by two or more neighbouring groups against a common enemy, the Iroquois.<sup>3</sup>

Gyles calls the Mohawk "ambitious, haughty, and blood-thirsty" and, as he shrewdly notes, they were their victims' Great Ideal<sup>4</sup> in custom and manner, for they inspired terror.

In the many tales of traditional fights with Mohawk told by Malecite, Penobscot, and Micmac (smaller and weaker tribes), "our side," through superior trickery and magic power, invariably wins.<sup>5</sup> This fictional sense of superiority does not agree with Gyles' designation of the Malecite mood toward Mohawk as "terrible apprehensions." In the darkness of fear they might whistle a boastful legendary song, but on a night in 1690, captive White boys could panic their masters and amuse themselves by creating sounds that suggested to quivering Malecite ears the terrible hovering "Maquas." A hundred and fifty years later two Malecite guides entertained Shove with tales of the Mohawk "of whom they have a sort of superstitious dread believing that every summer they despatch emissaries through the provinces, who lurk in the woods watching their ancient foes, the Malecites, to see what they are about."<sup>6</sup> Long before this, in 1712, the British, hard-pressed by the French and their Indian auxiliaries, had played upon Malecite and Micmac fears by importing their own traditional allies, the Mohawk.<sup>7</sup> The actuality of this fear among Malecite in 1850 seems to be Shove's misinterpretation of the story-teller's reaction to an old legend—had we no other evidence of its survival. Sixty years later, fear of Mohawk invasion was strong enough among Micmac to threaten the success of their Tercentenary celebration at Restigouche, Quebec. In the following year, 1911,

<sup>1</sup> Gyles, 178. For an account of Micmac feasts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries see Wallis, *Micmac*, 179-183.

<sup>2</sup> Maillard, 18-23.

<sup>3</sup> Wallis, *Micmac*, 203, 453.

<sup>4</sup> Gyles, 25.

<sup>5</sup> Mechling, 106-114; Wallis, 448-69; Rand, *Legends*, 137-41, 200-22, 341-46.

<sup>6</sup> Shove, 101-103.

<sup>7</sup> Wallis, *Micmac*, 210-11.

one of us (W. D. Wallis), about to start an anthropometric program at a Micmac Reserve in New Brunswick, was told by the influential old men, through the chief, not to do so. They had heard from a Malecite visitor (interpreter for William Mechling) that such research was Mohawk-inspired, if not Mohawk-subsidized, as a means of identifying any Micmac.<sup>1</sup>

The tenacity of Mohawk war tradition is not obscured by a vivid remembrance of the peaceful alliance within the Abenaki Confederacy. In the mid-eighteenth century, when the arch enemy of all Northeastern Indians was the White Man, the Iroquois became the leaders of a somewhat shadowy league for peace between themselves and Algonkin tribes in the Maritime Provinces and New England.<sup>2</sup> Regarding Malecite participation the following statement was made in 1835: "A deputation of the chiefs and principal men . . . proceed every third year to Caughnawaga to report on the state of affairs, and take part in the grand council of the [Iroquois] nation which is there held."<sup>3</sup>

We know little about the extent of the Great Fire Council's accomplishments in establishing unity and arbitrating quarrels among member tribes. There is, however, no doubt that the Council was a powerful agency in disseminating Iroquois culture, already attractive to the less colourful Algonkin. Iroquois-inspired innovations are evident in Abenaki intertribal ceremonies held throughout the nineteenth century. According to the rules of the Confederacy, a member tribe might not install its own chief. We have no account of an election or installation of a Malecite chief; but Malecite participated in a Penobscot ceremonial in 1816, and it is stated that they were to be summoned after the death of a Passamaquoddy chief.<sup>4</sup> The Malecite rôle at a Penobscot ceremony September 19, 1816, at which they and Passamaquoddy are the only visitors mentioned, is thus described:

"Early in the forenoon, the men from the Tarratine [Penobscot] tribe, convened in the great wigwam called the camp, seated themselves on the side platform according to seniority; Atteon, Neptune, and the select captains at the head, near the door, the former two being clad in coats of scarlet broadcloth and decorated with silver brooches, collars, arm-clasps, jewels and other ornaments. Upon a spread before them, of blue cloth, an ell square, were exhibited four silver medals, three of which were circular and twice the size of a silver dollar, the other was larger, in the form of a crescent. All these were emblematically inscribed with curious devices, and suspended by parti-colored ribbons, a yard in length with ends tied. The Marechite [Malecite] delegation, preceded by their chief, entered the camp in true Indian file, and sat down, according to individual rank, directly before the Tarratines [Penobscot]. These now uncovered their heads and laid aside their caps and hats, 'til the ceremonies were closed."

"Four belts of wampum, brought into the camp by a stately Marechite, were unfolded and placed in the area upon a piece of broadcloth, which

<sup>1</sup> Wallis, *Micmac*, 208-9.

<sup>2</sup> Speck, "The Eastern Algonkian Wabanaki Confederacy."

<sup>3</sup> Levinge, 102.

<sup>4</sup> Prince, *Passamaquoddy Texts*, 11-27.

enclosed them; when his Sagamore, presently rising, took and held one of them in his hands and addressed Atteon, from five to ten minutes, in a courtly speech, laying the belt at his feet. Three others in rotation, and next in rank of the same tribe, addressed in a similar manner the Tarratine candidates of comparative grades; all of which were tokens of unchanging friendship and sanctions of perpetual union. The Sagamore then taking the medal nearest Atteon, addressed him and his tribe in another speech of the same length as the former, in the course of which he came to momentary pauses, when the Tarratines collectively uttered deep guttural sounds, like 'aye'. These were evident expressions of assent to have Atteon, Neptune, Francis and others their first and second Sagamores, and two senior captains. The speaker, closing his remarks, advanced and placed the suspended medal, as a badge of investiture about Atteon's neck, the act by which he was formally induced into office and constituted Sagamore for life. Neptune and the two captains in their turns, after being shortly addressed by the other Marechite actors, were invested by them with the ensigns in the same way."<sup>1</sup>

Malecite, Penobscot, Micmac, and Indians from Norridgewock on the Kennebec River and from St. Francis were invited to Passamaquoddy ceremonies. Descriptions of these affairs suggest a blend of traits: the aboriginal custom of arrival in aligned canoes bearing the settlements' banners; the White-introduced "chief" coats and medals presented on the occasion of various British-Indian treaties and the Iroquois concepts of fixed ceremonial and political hierarchy foreign to the simple and almost egalitarian society of Eastern Algonkin. Among other Iroquois traits, the participation of women with men in the dances following the installation should probably be included. In the feeble survival of Abenaki ceremony among Cape Breton Micmac in 1923, women entered the dance, but only singly and under compulsion; their participation in other dances was contrary to custom.<sup>2</sup> The alliance of Abenaki peoples independent of the Iroquois was strengthened by the need for union against British and French. Two or more tribes sometimes joined forces to attack British frontier towns in New England, and Malecite joined Micmac in an attack on British forts in Acadia. During the American Revolution, Malecite, but not Micmac, supported British troops and Loyalists in fighting the rebellious colonists. Peace-time meetings of Malecite with Micmac to adjust their verging hunting-territories will be mentioned later (pp. 47-48).

#### *Folk-tales*

Folk-tales, as they were remembered between 1870 and 1915 constitute the major records of Malecite culture.<sup>3</sup> Themes and motifs are characteristically Abenaki: Gluskap is culture hero and transformer; Rabbit is trickster and tricked; cannibal giants come from the North; fights against

<sup>1</sup> C. A. Dillingham, *The Penobscots*. Bangor, Me., n.d. Quoted in Frank G. Speck, *Penobscot Man*, 240-243; 288-91.

<sup>2</sup> Parsons, 1923, 184-5, and 1926, for survivals at Chapel Island, C.B.; and Wallis, *Micmac*, 184-88, regarding the more aboriginal type of meeting.

<sup>3</sup> Jack, Mechling, Rand, Speck.

the Mohawk are won by heroes endowed with supernatural power.<sup>1</sup> With Passamaquoddy and Penobscot, Malecite share the story of Mount Kathadin, whose spirit marries a human girl. In 1689 the tale was told on the St. John River to John Gyles; his version is reprinted by Mechling,<sup>2</sup> who seems not to have identified it with Katahdin. Another tale recorded by Gyles concerns a bird which he calls the *Gulloua*:

"A boy was hunting with his bow and arrow at the foot of a rocky mountain, when the *gulloua* came diving through the air, grasped the boy, and although he was eight or ten years of age, she soared aloft and laid him in her nest, food for her young. The boy lay still on his face, but observed two of the young birds in the nest with him having much fish and flesh to feed upon. The old bird seeing they would not eat the boy, took him up in her claws and returned him to the place whence she took him. I have passed near the mountain in a canoe, and the Indians have said, 'There is the nest of the great bird that carried away the boy.' Indeed there seemed to be a great number of sticks put together like a nest, on the top of the mountain. At another time, they said, 'There is the bird, but he is now as a boy to a giant to what he was in former days.' The bird which we saw was a large and speckled one, like an eagle, though somewhat larger."<sup>3</sup>

Similar tales of abduction by a mythical bird, widely disseminated among North American Indians, have been recorded among Micmac in 1870 (*Culloo*, Rand) and in 1912 (*Kalu*, Wallis).

## MALECITE AT TOBIQUE

1953

The Tobique River, some 125 miles above Fredericton, joins the St. John at a point of land that has long been occupied by Malecite.

Tobique village, as Shove saw it in 1851, consisted of twenty dwellings in two rows facing each other across a green, a chapel and a graveyard, and a few fenced and ill-cultivated garden plots. "The Indians," he comments, "have no great genius for agriculture."

The best of the houses, neat and painted, had two rooms; the larger of these was 14 feet square, with floors and glass windows. Furnishings consisted of a stove, chair, table, and a few trunks and boxes; evidently the occupants slept on the floor. In good weather, cooking was done over open fires. The men spoke English fluently and were keen traders. The women kept their eyes lowered in the presence of a White Man, and children cried when he first looked at them, but at later meetings were "quite uproarious in their fun." To his ears the Malecite language had a pleasant sound, especially when spoken in the women's gentle tones.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Fisher gives an excellent discussion of Eastern Algonkin folktales.

<sup>2</sup> Mechling, 1914, 114-115.

<sup>3</sup> Gyles, 37.

<sup>4</sup> Shove, 80-82, 97.

Today the Tobique Indian Reserve is the home of nearly 400 Malecite and several White spouses. Four or five short streets converge on a group of White-owned and operated buildings: school, church, priest's house, and combined convent and hospital. There are several old houses, but the general effect is of freshness and cleanliness. Here, as on all other Maritime reserves, the housing programs both of the Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, and of that effected under the Veterans Land Act, are evident in the many new houses (and in repairs to older dwellings as well) built for the aged or the ill, and for the families of young veterans.

The quality and quantity of furnishings in the houses vary widely, from a sparseness in the poorest homes (little above the highest standard of Shove's day) to an abundance, which includes drapes, easy chairs, and the most important electric appliances. From the exterior of the dwelling one cannot safely predict the economic status or domestic tastes of the owner. The Indian Affairs Branch supplies only the house; the kind and amount of furnishings depend on a family's industry, ability, and taste. Through the open door of a new government house one may see in the dimness an old stove, a broken chair or two, and people crouched on the floor, making splint potato baskets. Perhaps, next door, electric wires lead into a sagging, paintless structure, to supply power for radio-phonograph, washing machine, and pink-shaded lamps. In the former instance a shiftless couple with many children have been given a roof over their heads; the other family, with three adults employed daily in construction and in housework across the border in Maine, have no intention of spending their good wages in house-building, or even in repairs, for eventually the government will do these things for them.

There are some well-tended gardens, inspired by the Indian Affairs Branch and stimulated by prize competitions. Whether or not Indians lack "the genius," neither Malecite culture nor that of northern New Brunswick has generated enthusiasm for agriculture, even a hundred years after Shove made his observations.

Many Whites today would agree with Shove about the soft Malecite voices, although more often than in his day the language they use is English. People of all ages know and use the native tongue, but in many young households it is seldom heard. All small children understand English, and most of them speak it easily. Old women, the most conservative group, deplore the decline in the use of Malecite and pay their highest compliment to an English war bride who, they say, addresses her red-headed brood in the language of their father's people. In this social setting we could not expect to find aboriginal culture flourishing, or even dimly remembered, by any except a rare "ancient" whose memory has stood the test of a very long time. Informants could tell us little about matters discussed in the preceding sections of this paper. Two men and six women between the ages of sixty and seventy told us what they could recall from the talk of their grandparents and what they had observed in early life of old-time Malecite ways. The women were much the better informants; a woman

under forty, who had enjoyed listening to old people now dead, produced as much data for us as did any of her elders.

### Material Culture

Of two survivals of earlier Malecite ways of making a living, one is guiding the "sports"—salmon fishermen, who come mainly from the States. The canoes used by guides are commercial products; no one now could build a canoe, even if bark were available. The good money earned easily in this short-season occupation is highly prized; a guide who loafed most of the year may be pointed out by older people as a success, even if he has drunk up his fees a day or two after earning them.

Another pre-White occupation is gathering fiddleheads. The tightly curled heads of ferns, as they are formed in the month of May, were the first spring greens for these Indians. Malecite say they taught the Whites to eat fiddleheads, and now they pick and truck them to commercial canneries in New Brunswick and Quebec. The fern must be picked at the right moment, when still curled "as tight as a fiddlehead." Malecite cooked them "in the old days" with a piece of animal fat; they do not add vinegar, as Whites do now. Fiddleheads, together with pancakes, fish, caribou, and moose, were the chief foods recalled by old people from thier childhood days.

Trout, salmon, and the flesh of game animals were preserved by smoking or salting and then packed into birch-bark boxes. People born about 1880 remember that their parents did this.

During the maple sugar season, families camped in the woods and slept on boughs in open-sided shelters supported at the four corners by upright poles. The man was in charge of boiling the sap and was assisted by his wife. Barefoot children ran about in the snow and enjoyed it all. The sugar was packed in bark containers; some families also made candy to sell to Whites.

Wild berries of all kinds were gathered, some of which, especially raspberries, were dried, cooked, pressed into round cakes, and again dried. The cakes were packed in bark vessels—later, in cans—and stored away for winter use. Before the cakes were eaten, they were washed and moistened with water. "Indian bread" was made in various ways. An informant said the best bread she ever ate was made of sour milk and flour, and cooked in hot coals. Another named the ingredients: soda, cream of tartar, flour, and water; and said the bread was cooked on top of a stove. Bark of willow or elder was dried for use as pipe tobacco.

More than one recollection of childhood, nearly eighty years ago, reflects the wandering life along the rivers of northwestern New Brunswick and southern Quebec:

"My father travelled up river often in his canoe, and we went with him. That's why my brothers and sisters were born in so many different places, some of them as far away from Tobique as Riviere du Loup. My father made his canoes. A man made his own, working alone.

"I remember when my father shot a whale. It was at Cacouna, on the St. Lawrence, just north of Riviere du Loup. I walked right into the whale's belly. The ribs were like stairs. Everything about the whale, even the ribs and the skin, was saved and was used for something.

"The Maliseet used to catch thousands of little birds, in traps with a falling door. They crated the birds in the traps and sent them away. I think they sold them."<sup>1</sup>

## Phases of Social Life

### *Celebrations*

Before there was a resident priest at Tobique, couples wishing to marry went by canoe to Grand Falls. On their return, the bride's father gave a feast, to which all were invited. Following the pattern of aboriginal ceremony, a man went from house to house, calling: "Bring your plates!" But unlike the old days, there was no oratory, and men, women, and children ate together. A cow or a lamb was roasted in a trench, and the meat was supplemented with beans, rice soup, and Indian bread. A similar feast was sometimes held at the time of a big dance.

Informants knew vaguely about the war dance and the old songs no longer sung. Much nearer their day were what they described as "shows." "There was no place to go, and sometimes the people would put on a show. They would say: 'We shall have a show tonight.' The Indians were actors. They had dancing, and someone played an accordian. A tub of water was nearby, and a dancer would fall into the water and make the people laugh. They painted their faces red, using something that grew in the gardens to supply the color. Recently this plant has not been grown, and people use red crepe paper to dye the face."

The great holidays of the Christian Church came later to Tobique. Christmas, we were told, was not celebrated during the childhood of people now aged seventy. Easter now is marked by a picnic in the woods, no matter how cold the day (a European inspiration?). Unlike the Micmac settlements, where for at least two hundred years there has been a fusion of the Saint's day with an annual aboriginal tribal gathering,<sup>2</sup> St. Anne's Day here seems to have no long history. Several old women said they thought the first celebration was held at Tobique about 1904. In recent years it seems to have become a typical French-Canadian parish festival; Mass and the veneration of a holy relic, followed by a "picnic," a ball game, a dance, and sometimes by an "Indian pow wow." This last feature was instigated by a priest who, for the purpose of raising funds, outfitted the Malecite dancers with costumes of fringed dark-brown cloth in order to attract White visitors. These costumes he used to store away between celebrations, but nearly all have been destroyed by fire. In 1953 one was in the possession of

<sup>1</sup> Possibly to be released in shooting-matches. In 1881 wild pigeons trapped in the Mississippi valley were so used "by the thousand" in a match near New York City. Chapman and Reed, *Color Key to North American Birds*, 123. New York, 1903.

<sup>2</sup> Wallis, *Micmac*, 183-190.

Mrs. Peter Thomas, who wished to wear it when we took her photograph. A beaded velvet stole ornamented with the double-curve motif, characteristic of Eastern Algonkin design, completed her costume.

### *The Good Old Days*

One or two aged men and women spoke of ancient tribal days: the old-time Indians were healthy and could stand more than their descendants of the present day; they know at what time the moon would rise; what next day's weather would be; what kind of weather there would be until the next moon. But informants did not elaborate on these statements or make them with much enthusiasm. Perhaps the tone of a young woman, if not her slight misinformation, reflects the present attitude better than a pious sigh: "In the old days the women hunted, and the men stayed home and painted their faces. Now the women stay home and paint *their* faces."

### *Kinship*

The use of native kinship terms has almost disappeared; two old men who were questioned insisted that only the women knew the terms. The following list and explanatory remarks are made up from contributions by four women in assembly, who prompted or corrected one another. At the present time, Malecite make only the kinship distinctions that are observed by English people, but employ Malecite words. *Dul na be'muk*, my relative, is a general term for any kin. The designations reported are as follows:

<i>mi dok'tc</i> — father	<i>ni za luk</i> — father's brother
<i>nik'wus</i> — mother	<i>gu'la muk'sis</i> — mother's brother
<i>min'sun</i> — grandfather	<i>no 'kum</i> — aunt
<i>no'kmus</i> — grandmother	<i>na lok'a nas</i> — nephew
<i>bi'ta wi mu'sum</i> — great-grandfather	<i>na lo'ka nis</i> — niece
<i>bi'ti o i no'kum</i> — great-grandmother	<i>gwe nis</i> — grandchild
<i>tsi'nu wa'</i> — brother	<i>bi ti o i gwe'nis</i> — great-grandchild
<i>no si' miz'</i> — younger sister	<i>tsum</i> — daughter-in-law
<i>muk sis'</i> — older sister	<i>nlusuk</i> — son-in-law

A relative older than the speaker is still addressed by the kinship term, never by personal name; to a younger relative one does not use the kinship term. A godparent is addressed by a term indicating that relationship.

### *Marriage*

Marriage is entirely a Roman Catholic ceremony; and although there are no known traditions of aboriginal polygamy, Malecite know that it existed and that it was forbidden by government and Church; that is all.

In the period preceding World War I, it was common for parents to marry a daughter of thirteen or fourteen to a man thirty to forty years her senior.<sup>1</sup> There appears to have been a widespread attempt by priests and

<sup>1</sup> This custom is bitterly recalled by Micmac women who were similarly married off between 1890 and 1912. Wallis, *Micmac*, 237.

parents to make sure that girls were married while still "unspoiled." Malecite informants deeply resented their experiences as young wives of old men. An extreme instance was that of a fourteen-year-old married to a man of sixty-eight who lived for another twenty years. When well past fifty, she entered a converse arrangement with a youth of nineteen, a marriage which brought no greater happiness. In another instance a woman aged sixty-five told of her marriage at fourteen to a man of forty-four. What her parents had found so good about the marriage they had planned, she could not see; for the man kept another girl in his house. He was "smart" and did not drink, but she could never like him. He had a steady job as caretaker of a sportsmen's club at Mont Joli, and there they both worked hard—she as a cook—and saved their money. Later, he contracted tuberculosis and began to drink, and their savings were soon spent. After his death she married again and really loved her second husband.

Marriages, people say, break up if there are no children, but often they have been stabilized by the informal adoption of a child. Now the threat of losing a beloved foster-child at the demand of its parent is bringing recognition of the need for legal adoption.

#### *Pregnancy and Childbirth*

Pregnancy was surrounded by various taboos, many of them current among French and British folk, and also among present-day Micmac.<sup>1</sup> These do not include forbidding certain foods. "We were too poor," the old women said, "we ate anything." Craving for a specific food, however, is well known, and birthmarks are believed to result from failure to satisfy the longing. Danger of blemish is greatly increased if the unsatisfied woman touches any part of her body; in this way a women marked her child with a brown stain shaped like dulse; others, with a strawberry. One informant has a birthmark full of blood because her mother saw and craved strawberries which she was too poor to buy. An "Indian doctor" told her mother that as soon as the berries were ripe, she should rub some of them on the birthmark, and it would disappear. She thinks it is much lighter than it would have been if she had not thus treated it.

Fright during pregnancy can cause birthmarks or deform the foetus. The red mark on an infant's face was attributed to the mother's terror of a spider hanging over her face while she lay in bed.

Monsters are the result of fear caused by animals; for example: hare-lip; frog-face; and hands, face, and abdomen like those of a groundhog, on an otherwise human infant. In the two latter instances, it was alleged, doctor or midwife would kill the monster. Even if the child is not marked by the mother's fright, it will never become a healthy person.

Monsters are also created by disrespect to animals or persons, or by too much concern for a specific food or occupation. Teasing an animal can produce animal features in the foetus; a passion for eating sheep's head

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<sup>1</sup> Wallis, *Micmac*, 248-51.

resulted in a baby covered with wens; a pregnant woman who had mocked another in the same condition, because the latter could not bring her knees together, bore a child with crippled legs.

Sometimes these concepts are combined; as in the case of a pregnant woman teased by another who made her look at the deformity of her six-toed cat. The victim's daughter was born with one "funny" toe, out of alignment. For the good of her child, a prospective mother should take none of these things seriously; thereby she may escape bringing ill upon the child in her womb. These dangers exist only during the first three or four months of pregnancy. Once life has been felt in the foetus, it is a human being and cannot be injured by external happenings.

To avoid having the cord wrapped around the child at birth, do not go under a rope or a clothesline, sew on a machine (because the thread is wrapped around a bobbin), or ride on a merry-go-round during the first three weeks of pregnancy.

Difficult delivery is averted if the woman never hesitates in a doorway. If, when part-way through a doorway, she thinks of something she wants in the house she should continue through the doorway before turning back.

Prediction of the sex of an unborn child is made in the seventh month; signs, however, are read differently.

Some say that if the woman is larger in front she will have a boy, larger in the back, a girl. Others are sure that a woman who is large all around will have a boy; protuberance only in front proclaims a girl. Boys are preferred and in a family are favoured over girls. People used to say: "Take the little girl and drown it!" In one family a son who was born after the birth of six daughters, though now an adult, is still called by the wonderful word "Boy". A child born after seven of the opposite sex is called *madeluno'sis*, possessor of magic power. A change of sex ends a series of stillbirths, and children born subsequently will live. An informant cited her own case of bearing three stillborn males before a female arrived; later children, some of each sex, survived.

At time of birth two women assist the mother. The parturient lies down. In the old days a woman remained in bed for a week after childbirth; at present, five days to a week. A woman, now sixty-nine years of age, was attended by her mother and an old woman who received five dollars for her services.

### *Infancy and Childhood*

Nursing begins immediately after birth; the infant receives the colostrum. All the old women had nursed their children for eleven to eighteen months; their mothers had nursed children for two years. At weaning, children were not frightened from the breast; some "just let them cry"; others said the weaning was gradual, and nursing was continued once a day until the child ate well of other foods. Now that few babies are nursed, said one woman, the mothers get milk leg. Babies are born at the Reserve Hospital, and, according to the nuns, the mother nurses the new-

born as long as she remains there; but after she goes home and resumes her tasks, the milk often fails. Some of the young women are delicate; many have had tuberculosis. However, thanks to the teaching of the nuns and to several educational films provided by a milk company, women know how to keep a milk formula in fit condition for twenty-four hours; and the high infant mortality to which informants referred—"I had seven children; six died when they were babies"—has sharply declined.

The mother takes care of the small child and trains it. Older siblings may help, but in good homes they are not required to take responsibility. This statement, made by several elderly informants, was confirmed by a young woman, the oldest of nine siblings. Women spoke of a mother's compelling a Tobique six-year-old to wash baby diapers as "all wrong." Mothers who do day-work outside the Reserve prefer to hire a baby-sitter rather than to leave the child with relatives.

Women of about sixty said they began their children's toilet-training at eighteen months; young mothers start it at nine months. Spanking is considered a good means of punishment, not administered often enough. A bogey-man is used to warn small children against straying from home—"A tramp will get you!" (presumably, a White tramp).

Children receive the tolerance and affection common to Indian groups. In the youth of our older informants, parental attention and tenderness appeared in many forms. They spoke of fathers who talked about Malecite tradition for the children's benefit and who made sleds, bought skates, and spent winter evenings keeping bonfires alight on the ice to warm the youngsters. Parents made pine dancing-dolls—"boys" from twigs, and "girls" from a cluster of needles at the top of a bough cut so as to stand erect in their long "skirts." These were placed on a piece of bark, which was jiggled with the hand or vibrated with the foot to set the little figures dancing. Both boys and girls played with them. Today children have expensive commercial toys, which they are not expected to treat with care. The children are everywhere at all hours; but parents soon make them aware of the limits to their freedom. Old-time respect for the aged is still taught, at least by grandmothers; little girls of three are not permitted to run in front of visitors, including elderly anthropologists from the States.

The name is bestowed in the Roman Catholic manner by the godmother at baptism. Nicknames are received from an incident, or trait of looks or behaviour. Of two little sisters, the darker was called "Nigger," and the other, for no reason we could discover, "Pie." In many instances such names persist throughout life; as in the case of a woman called in childhood by the name of the pet kitten she was frequently heard calling; today this "Twa" is embroidered on her sweater and woven into her guest towels. She seems rather pleased with the name and the origin of its bestowal.

Swimming, now a popular sport of old and young, was not an accomplishment in the old days, so informants believed; however, this is not true, as John Gyles attests. Boys now learn to swim when about five or six years of age; and girls, when about twelve.

(Right to left)  
Theresa Nicolas  
(the bachelor girl),  
her mother,  
and  
Mrs. Mary Paul



Every boy and girl is said to have a best friend of like sex. Boy companions initiate their relationship when they are small and continue it until marriage. Frequently, girl intimates are cousins; after one of them marries, the other is lonely and does not go about much. A woman of sixty-three, whose best friend, "like a sister," had recently died, said that as a substitute she now visits a cousin of her own age.

### *Puberty*

Informants know that formerly boys and girls ceased to play together when the boys' voices changed, or the girls' menses commenced. In referring to their first menses, older women followed the pattern which we encountered among Micmac and Eastern Dakota: they claimed ignorance of the approaching change and fear upon its arrival. That their mothers had given no preparatory explanation or warning of the phenomenon is doubtless true; but the fear was probably the result of whispered half-truths and misunderstood observations. A woman said that to spare her daughters a similar fright she had instructed them fully before puberty and had explained menstruation also to her sons. An interesting suggestion of the psychosomatic element in dysmenorrhea appeared in the case of a woman who said that, throughout the ten years of her marriage to an elderly husband whom she disliked, she suffered from cramps, which she attributed to a chill while swimming; she stated as an apparent *non sequitur*

that the cramps ended when she married her second husband, a contemporary with whom (she had said in a previous interview) she was very much in love.

Appearance of secondary sex characteristics frightened some ignorant girls. An informant, now an old woman, on first noticing pubic hairs, thought she was turning into a beast and cut them off. On discovering that she had done this, her mother gave the helpful explanation that her daughter had "caught" this growth from too close a friendship with a French girl; for "the French are very hairy." Possibly a twofold purpose was involved: to avoid direct talk on a tabooed subject, and to break up a friendship of which she disapproved. Nowadays girls tell each other everything, a practice which lessens nervousness and strain.

### *Drinking*

Several women mentioned their immediate concern with problems arising from excessive drinking by the men, or rarely, by the women, of their families. The only instance of suicide at Tobique that anyone could recall was that of a man who, while drunk, set out in his canoe on the flooding St. John River and took no paddle with him. People are not certain that he was fully conscious of his deed.

### *Death Customs*

Death rites are those of the Roman Catholic Church. No reference was made to wailing on a high place or to the feast that concluded a period of mourning, as described by John Gyles. Malecite bury stillbirths and miscarriages quietly in the cemetery. For all other dead there is a funeral, preceded by a wake which lasts for two or three nights, during which time the house is crowded with people singing, saying rosaries, and eating supper.

### *Afterlife*

Concerning the afterlife the following was stated: "Indians do not go to *no do ges' wag'an*, purgatory. They go to their own Happy Hunting Ground. We know this because all the pictures you see of persons who have returned from the dead show them without a feather. This means they are not Indians".

### *Natural and Supernatural*

After reading the preceding account, one could safely infer that at Tobique knowledge of aboriginal Malecite thought and belief concerning the impending world and the powers therein is fragmentary indeed. Moreover, the bits and pieces of explanation of natural phenomena and the untoward in man and beast are probably of French or British origin, or are a mixture of Indian and White, difficult to untangle and not very profitable. Of the phases of primitive science, little interest remains concerning celestial phenomena and plant life. Respect for native medicines is fast disappearing. The most significant survival seems to be the concept of

unusual ability, the Malecite believing certain people to possess supernatural power. The malevolent wish of an enemy, they believe, can cause great misfortune.

### *Natural Phenomena*

The Malecite word for the sun is "day sun," *es ka pa dau'tsek gi' zak*, and for the moon, "night sun," *ni' bal'tsek gi' zak*. A circle about sun or moon, *pa san'tum*, foretells rain. A circle with clouds in it, *zi bi'za*, foretells rain in two or three days; if there are clouds throughout the circle, *lan's*, it will rain for a week or longer. A falling star means news. A wish made at that time will be fulfilled.

A comet may set the world afire. A rainbow, *men gwan'*, foretells rain in a day or so. If a second bow appears soon after one has disappeared, there will be clear weather. If the Milky Way is very clear, bad wind is coming.

The first quarter of the moon indicates good or bad hunting, and also the time to kill hogs. A wish made during this quarter will be fulfilled. A certain quarter indicates to a woman the time of menstruation. The only designations of calendrical moons which we could obtain were as follows:

December to January, *ski' gi' zal*, or *pu blū'zi mo az tīk*—"big moon", or "hard moon"

February, *la sa gwa az tīk*—"mild wind"

March, *ski'ba*—"milder", or "when hens lay"

April, *skīga na'sun*—"spring moon"

May, *wi di na ig'ta*—"snow going fast"

June, *i'ka sa wak'*—"snow gone"

July, *ni'ban*—"summer gone"

August, *to wā' guk*—"fall moon"

September to December inclusive, *seg ni'pa*—"nothing growing"

If in winter only white clouds appear in the north, there will be much snow. Dark clouds in the north signify a mild winter. Dew on the ground in the evening means dry weather is ahead. If bees build their homes higher than usual, there will be a hard winter, with much snow. Fog, especially at night, means sickness.

Thunder signifies that the Malecite's forefathers are getting angry. But the Malecite are not afraid and laugh at the Whites' fear of thunder. One old woman used to say, while hiding in the cellar during a thunderstorm: "Danger? I have no fear of the lightning."

At Tobique, snows are not so deep as formerly; nor are thunderstorms so severe. The world is turning around, and we are gradually moving southward; so we get milder weather. Some mountains appear to follow the observer. One such is called "Travelling Mary," and certain others are "Travelling Children." Stones grow: "I went swimming, put my name on top of a rock there, and next time I went to it, the rock was much larger. My name was still on it, but the letters were larger than they were when I put them there."

### *Mensuration*

Measurements were taken in hand-widths, and by the distance from the outer side of one hand to the outer side of the other, thumbs extended outward from the palms, touching. This is now said to be about twelve inches. The width of the thumb was used and is now reckoned as one inch.

### *Animals*

Respect for animals, a characteristic of North American Indians, was expressed only in regard to pregnancy taboos. Information and anecdotes about animal behaviour, pets, and animal portents were scanty.

Beavers, a woman stated, work in co-operation. If one fails to do his share, the others kill it. A queen beaver is in charge of them. After she dies, they meet and elect another. It is her duty to warn them if a person or other danger approaches. This she does by slapping the surface of the water with her tail. All of them then disappear.

The snake is a prince who was cursed. It sheds its skin four times a year. Its shed "dress" is a valued medicine. A woman saw a snake lying as stiff as though dead. "Don't touch it with the bare feet," her husband said. She did so and crushed its head. If you do this, all your sins will be pardoned. A snake in the flower garden is good for the garden; the snake kills the insects which feed on the flowers. Snakes purify the water in streams and swamps.

Salmon bite well in the evening, when fireflies are plentiful. A man caught a large salmon. A White Man touched it. The salmon turned over and said: "Don't!" He again touched it, and it said: "Don't!" The White Man said: "I don't want that salmon; it can talk."

A whippoorwill calling at night is a sign of rain. An owl hooting near a house is a sign of death (One informant said this had no significance). The howling of a dog at night means evil will come, perhaps; that of a fox or wolf, at any time of day, means death. To touch a partridge is unlucky. Children are not allowed to open (spread) out the tail feathers of a dead partridge. If bats get into the hair, thunder will bring them out. On dog days in August all animals go to a river to bathe. At that time a person can be easily poisoned by the water.

Dogs and cats are abundant on the Reserve. Frequently a cat is named for another animal: for example, *Mū'in*, Bear; *Ma'sa gwet*, Rabbit. A black cat is *me ka da we*; *tso 'ro sis* is kitten. A large dog is *el 'e mūk dūk*; *el'e mūk tū id* is pup. Each dog has a name, usually bestowed by a child. Examples are: Macaroni, because of its long stringy hair; London; Prince; and Good Night. Pets included turtles, fawns, and squirrels. Some caught a young crow, split its tongue, and taught it to talk.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Crows and Jays . . . possess much range of expression and several species learn to enunciate words with more or less ease." Chapman and Reed, op. cit., 164.

Two birds were sitting on a roof, talking to one another. One was crying. The other asked: "Why are you crying?"

"So many people are now using cars; no dung is left on the road for us to eat."

Animals about which the Malecite have heard from Whites, or which have been introduced by Whites, are given names approximating the English designations: *kū hus*, cow; *don 'ki uk*, donkey; *go'cetc*, goat; *pi līp* (bleat) sheep.

### *Plants*

Plants, apart from their use as medicines, received slight treatment by our informants. Two trees are believed to bring evil. Moosewood—dwarf maple—is an unlucky tree to have near one's house. A bad spirit is in the leaves, which should never be touched. The pine tree was cursed by the Malecite's forefathers; it is a witch. Bad luck comes to those who have a pine tree near the house and to those who take pine cones into the house. Playing with cones will bring death. Do not plant a pine tree, and do not cut one down. (Yet pine dolls were favourite toys for children.)

According to Adney, "The whole plant world . . . is classified into animate and inanimate [in the language syntax] . . . The Malecite animate means 'alive' in the manner of animals.

"Thus most of the trees and some smaller plants are classified as animate, which is indicated in the plural form by suffixed-*uk*, *-ek*, *-ik* . . . Plants that grow in clusters, like some ferns, take only the plural form . . . Most small plants are in gender inanimate because their stalks die down at the end of the season. In these the plural ends in *-ul*, *-el*, *-il* . . .

"This gender rule governs the names for berries and smaller fruits . . . Among the berries are two divisions in both of which *-min* suffixed to the descriptive portion of the name indicates action of the hand in picking . . . All berries that, like the Indian corn, grow in bunches, mature and are gathered at one time . . . take the inanimate suffix—*min* even though the stalk or tree by rule would be animate." (*Acadian Naturalist*, 1: 103-104, 1944.)

### *Sickness and Its Treatment*

Today at Tobique, the attitude toward illness and its alleviation or cure is a jumble of old and new, Indian and European. The fear which twenty years ago resulted in their rejection of help from hospitals, nurses, and government-subsidized physicians has been replaced by a demand for all these services plus additional ones. Education received from resident Sisters of Charity and other sources, such as the milk-company films mentioned previously, and from observation of the good effects of 'Whites' medicines on family and friends, is in part responsible for the change. Moreover there is a strong desire to get anything that is free from the government. A Sister of Charity told us that in 1936 when she first came to

Tobique the old people would say nothing about health. When doctor or dentist visited the Reserve, the children were hidden or were allowed to run away. Now grandparents, as well as parents, bring children to the hospital. During our visit, an old woman asked to be admitted merely because she felt tired and wanted a nice rest.

From the Whites also has come belief in the miraculous cures wrought by Saints of the Roman Catholic Church, particularly at Ste. Anne de Beaupré, Quebec, where those who can afford it make repeated pilgrimages. A relic, said to be a bone of the saint, is used to treat the crippled during the St. Anne's Day celebration at Tobique. In 1952, according to an informant, a woman discarded her cane, and another, a Passamaquoddy from Maine, a month after contact with the sacred bone was able to dance. Two examples of Malecite faith in Christian cures follow:

M. F., aged seventy-six, has sore eyes. When she was in a hospital a few years ago, "something came out of a radio" and went into her eye. It was tuberculosis. Each year she goes to Ste. Anne de Beaupré and washes her eyes in the fountain. In that way she has avoided contracting tuberculosis.

Mrs. F. N. is crippled. Her bones were broken when she was a child, and were not set. A leaf poultice was applied to the fracture, and thereafter she used crutches. One Holy Week, when she was a child, her father put her on a toboggan at midnight, and carrying two jugs they set out for a brook. At the hour when Christ was crucified, the water changed to blood. The two prayed.

The father doused her leg in the brook, and she drank from the stream. They carried the jugs home filled with the holy water.

In those days there was no priest at the Reserve and one seldom came there. Many years later Mrs. F. N.'s daughter, leader of the first Malecite Girl Guides, started out with her troop at the proper hour to see the brook turn to blood. But the girls fooled too much, and the water did not change.

When the first St. Anne's Day was celebrated at Tobique, about 1904, Mrs. F. N. gave up her crutches and began going outside the Reserve to do house-work. At the St. Anne's Day Mass, at eight a.m., each person at the altar-rail kisses the relic of St. Anne, and it is brushed over any ailing part of the body. Still suffering, at the age of sixty-nine, she wishes she were not so poor—her husband deserted her early in their married life—and that she could go to Beaupré. Another old woman present comforted her: "You'd just get sick on the long trip there. One St. Anne is as good as another St. Anne."

Though Saint, R.N., and M.D. have weakened the practice of the Indian doctor, they have not destroyed nor ended the sale of his medicines to the Malecite and neighbouring Whites.

Among middle-aged or elderly persons, there is a general belief that "people are not as strong and healthy as they used to be," that the old

Malecite never used to lose their teeth, and that Indian medicine was the best. When it was suggested to the two women who made this pronouncement that since the beginning of the world the younger generation has been going to the dogs, they solemnly responded that they believed this to be so.

Aboriginal ability to survive is illustrated by the following:

An old man lived in the woods. He ate something poisonous, though he did not know it was such. While creeping around, almost dead, he found a medicine, swallowed it, and felt much better.

He rose, and saw a bear approaching. He was barely able to raise his gun. He shot the bear, cut it up, and ate its flesh. After he had eaten, he was well.

Little was said to us directly about supernatural causes of disease, but belief in their existence is implied in the employment of various preventive medicines and treatments, such as sending children out to eat the first hailstones that fall in spring, the former use of cedar in pillows, and the still continued practice of chewing calamus root—all “to keep sickness away.”

For stuttering, several possible explanations were offered, all by the same informant: that the child has been stopped too abruptly from crying; that the stutterer has learned it from hearing another; that alcohol is a temporary cause. A father and son at Tobique stutter; but stuttering is not considered an inherited trait.

Formerly many people, not all of them “doctors,” gathered medicines for everyday use; now only calamus is gathered by a few laymen. Remedies supposed by informants to be purely native include the following: for pain in wrist or ankle, wrap eelskin or snakeskin around it; for kidney trouble, steep princess pine, seven bunches for men, five for women. Certain red vines are used for children’s ailments. For worms, cut a popple downward, steep it, and drink the tea. Steeped popple bark, if cut upward from the tree, increases a mother’s milk supply. To dry up the milk, cut the bark downward.

Balm of Gilead is good for sores. Steeped ground-hemlock brings out clots and alleviates afterbirth pain. *Wi'ko kes'ka*, “golden vine,”<sup>1</sup> is given to babies to clear a coated tongue. For sore eyes, apply a compress of warm tea-leaves. For a boil, apply molasses, or hot cut-up laundry soap. For a cough, take molasses with a little soda; for a cold in the chest, apply mustard; for fits, rub salt on the hands. Dulse cures worms. For toothache, heat a plate and hold it to the cheek; or hold cold water in the mouth. For ear-ache, pour melted butter in the ear. For burns, apply molasses or manure. If a wound on arm or leg bleeds badly, bind the limb below and above the wound, and leave it there until the doctor comes. Chewing-tobacco placed on a wound will stop the bleeding. A skunk is good for tuberculosis. If the animal “lets out,” the odour will cure whatever ill is in one; it is most beneficial if the urine falls on the person.

<sup>1</sup> In 1911 gold-root (*wiskiwes*) was a Micmac remedy for chapped lips.

A man at Woodstock, N.B., who for years had skinned skunks was thus cured of tuberculosis. Skunk grease rubbed on the throat will cure croup. For fever, put sliced potatoes, vinegar, and salt herring on the forehead; or apply steeped snakeroot. For a discharging ear, put salt pork in it.<sup>1</sup>

Hysterics, which is cured by putting salt in the victim's mouth, is a form of love-sickness (a French concept); thickening of the blood causes the attack. Hiccups—humorously said to be caused by "not enough whiskey"—are attributed to convulsions. Tell the sufferer something to frighten him, or something to overjoy him, and he will stop. A man who had hiccups for fourteen days ceased when he was given twenty dollars.

The disease that no White doctor can cure the Indian doctor can master. The treatment is more important than the medicine. The power of healing comes as the deathbed gift of one so endowed, or from the peculiar circumstances of birth as a twin or as a seventh son or daughter in unbroken succession of that sex.<sup>2</sup>

Mrs. C. N., who makes and sells a medicine with extensive curative powers, says that as a child and a young girl she was always interested in the sick. Noting this, her uncle, a twin who "owned" the medicine, called her to him when he was dying and gave her his knowledge and power. The medicine (of secret ingredients) is steeped very slowly in a large quantity of water until the liquid is reduced by half. It is drunk or is used externally to bathe the afflicted part of the body. She knows that her nostrum will cure typhoid, pneumonia, cancer, paralysis, and poison ivy; and she feels sure that if polio patients were soaked in a bath of it they would recover as completely as did a boy who rubbed his paralyzed face with the heated medicine. This boy also applied it to his feet, whence the warmth rose to his face.

Another patient, a bedridden girl who could not move her arms or legs, was rubbed with the medicine. She cried, and said that she could not move. Mrs. C. N., who was treating the girl, insisted that she get up and put her feet on the floor. Next day the treatment was repeated. The girl said she could not walk, but the "doctor" insisted that she do so, and the girl walked. Three days later she walked past the "doctor's" house. The same medicine cured a White train-conductor of diabetes.

If cancer appears, immediately use the medicine for nine days. Mrs. C. N.'s mother was cured of a sore lump on her breast. In three months time it became a hard lump, and out came a bean. You could hear it drop to the floor.

Mrs. C. N. also highly recommended a salve made of balsam and roots, gathered in the autumn and mixed with unsalted butter. It is especially good for eczema.

Medicines that cure and cause sterility are known. The "doctor" gave brief information in reply to our question: A bush about three feet high,

<sup>1</sup> For comparison of Malecite concepts concerning medicines, witchcraft, and will o' the wisp with folk-beliefs of French and British Canadians. *Journal of American Folklore*, 17: 39-60, 1904; 31: 265-67, 1920; 33: 168-78, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> See magic power and twinship on pp. 33-34.

which bears red berries in the autumn, is used to cure sterility. It is difficult to procure, because forest fires have destroyed much of the area where it grew in abundance.

Production of permanent sterility is a secret of an individual "doctor." At present, women who do not want children are treated by an old man at Princeton, Maine.

From a woman ten years younger than Mrs. C. N., we heard about the healing power of her mother. She rationalized to us, as Whites, that her mother practised in the days before there were nurses at Tobique, and only in an emergency; or took cases given up by White doctors as incurable. This Indian doctor, Mrs. X, was French-speaking, the second-born of twins, and a seventh daughter. She had power, and her daughter believed she learned how to use it from her Malecite husband who had plenty of power too.<sup>1</sup> To patients who came to her she gave Indian medicine, saying, "Have confidence in me. Believe that I'll cure you, and I can do something for you."<sup>2</sup> Of Mrs. X's medical knowledge her daughter professed to have learned little. Her mother had said that a pregnant woman can cure a lump on any one's body by her spittle taken during the morning fasting and applied to the patient with the sign of the cross. When Mrs. X was near death, she gave her power to a grand-daughter, saying, "You will be the next doctor." The girl was only fourteen years of age. She has shown no interest yet, but she may later.

### *Supernatural Power*

Malecite, like Algonkin tribes near them, still believe they possess a power for good and evil not shared by their White neighbours. How strong the belief is today and to what age groups it is confined would be difficult to determine. Certain informants, accustomed to Whites and knowing what they like to hear about Indians, may present their material as being more recent and more nearly related to them than it actually is ("My father was a witch"). Their accounts, however, are congruent with earlier observations, with what we know of Micmac and Penobscot beliefs, and with those held by French and British Canadians living on the pioneer fringe.

The power called *ma dē'wa hin* (*me de'u lin*, Adney) is inherent in beasts and birds, particularly the saw-whet owl; in the tree burls from which game bowls are made; and in certain men and women, the witches. The human possessor of this power can see events happening in a distant place and can perform good deeds, or at least harmless ones; but most of the tales about witches describe the bad wish sent in animal form, usually in a dream to one whom the witch wishes to harm. Malecite witches also harr or destroy the livestock and the pets of those who refuse their requests. In most of the accounts, European elements predominate; in all they are clearly present. But to the Malecite the manifestations of *ma dē'wa hin* are

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 32-33.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Marius Barbeau says this is the formula of the witch of Beauce and Gaspé; the corollary being, "If you don't have confidence, I'll send the illness to you". *Journal of American Folklore*, 33: 220, 1920.

Indian and their own. In an unpublished note dated 1949 Adney says that each witch had a *pu hi'gun*, an animal into which he would turn himself on setting off to injure or to spy. The concept is implicit in several accounts of dreams.<sup>1</sup>

An animal, possibly the *pu hi'gun*, may repeatedly enter the dreams of a prospective witch. During the boyhood of a man now living at Tobique, crows used to talk to him in dreams; he would have become a witch had his mother not compelled him to confess this to the priest. Some witches are said to have been born with the power. Some achieve their evil ends by boiling seven needles and sticking them into the woodwork of an enemy's house. At Woodstock Reserve, in 1945, a dog whose master had refused to give him to a witch was run over by a bus, the effect of a witch's "bad wish."<sup>2</sup>

The two accounts of witches that follow were given by women, the first aged about seventy, the second, in her late fifties, who told her story with emotion, accompanied by round sweeping gestures:

(1) My great-grandfather was a witch. He went trapping in the woods in winter, and his wife went with him. She worried about her son, a young boy whom they had left at the Reserve. Great-grandfather could "see" the boy. He would answer, "He's okay. He's singing hymns."

One time his wife wished she had an apple. He went out of the house and came back immediately with five apples—big, red, lovely, and they had no seeds. He took an auger, bored a hole in a tree, and out came molasses.

One autumn while hunting in Quebec, he was refused credit by a storekeeper. He went out, filled his pockets with chips, came back, and handed them to the storekeeper. The chips, to the storekeeper, looked like money, and so the witch got his winter supplies.

In the spring he said to the storekeeper, "What do I owe you?"  
"Nothing."

"Did you find a lot of chips among your money last fall?"

"Yes," said the storekeeper.

(2) This really happened. My father had the power. One autumn he was out guiding sports (sportsmen). He started to get the camp supper.

It was dusk. He had to go some distance into the woods to get water from a brook. He knew that a neighbour on the Tobique Reserve was his enemy. As he approached the brook, he felt this enemy was close, but he did not see him. He dipped his pail into the brook and looked around. In the bushes he saw something move and push back the branches as if to look through them. Out of the bushes came his enemy, in the shape of a bull. My father saw a rock with an edge sharp as the blade of a knife. It was his only chance to save his life. He struck the bull between the eyes. Blood flowed out, and the bull faded away.

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Adney, unpublished note.

Back home at the Reserve his family saw that their nearest neighbour was extremely ill. His wife, a medicine woman ["doctor"], was called in to treat the dying man. She made medicine and gave him a drink of it. The man's life was saved. Two weeks later her husband came home from the camp. On the night of his return he asked, "Did you go to the sick neighbour's house?"

"Yes."

He told her about the bull, and added, "You saved my enemy's life." (Only some member of my father's family could have saved that life. The man was sick because my father had got the better of him).

Twins and veiled babies, born under conditions that seem unnatural and therefore awe-inspiring, are endowed with extraordinary abilities and powers. The seventh son or daughter was also said to have supernatural gifts, but these were attributed much more strongly to the caul or to twinship. This suggests that the borrowed concept of the "mystic seven" has not fitted comfortably into the Malecite system. Belief that twins are superior and beneficent beings was not shared by Micmac; in 1911, but not today, Micmac considered them an abomination, and their mother a bitch. Sanction for the Malecite attitude is found in a tale about Gluskap, the culture hero, told to Silas Rand by Gabriel Thomas, of Fredericton, presumably a Malecite:

"Glooscap was one of twins. Before they were born, they conversed and consulted together how they would better enter the world. Glooscap determined to be born naturally; the other resolved to burst through his mother's side."<sup>1</sup> This tale may be reflected also in the belief that only the second-born of twins will be extraordinary. Powers mentioned as conferred by twinship are skill in healing the sick, and artistic ability.

The following account of a son killed in World War II was given by a woman of seventy:

Peter and Paul were twins. Peter is like anybody, but Paul, the second twin, was a good doctor. He was a seventh boy, but there had been a girl, somewhere, breaking the sequence of males. The power came from his being a twin. Twins must be secret about their power, otherwise it is "killed."

By touch, Paul cured toothache, warts—anything. The power was first recognized when he was two years of age. A seven-months old baby had sore eyes. Paul wet his fingers in his mouth and touched the baby's eyes. They cleared completely. His father had a pipe cancer. The little boy said, "Mouth sore?" He rubbed it and cured it in two or three days. He could cure sore throat, rheumatism that crippled the joints, any pain. He first put his fingers into his mouth, then rubbed the painful part. When he was sixteen, he was ashamed of the power and tried to quit healing; but so many people came for him that he scarcely had time to eat. He was often called out to visit the sick.

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<sup>1</sup> Rand, *Legends of the Micmac*, 339.

He could carry a hot coal in his hand without being burned. The family would see him, a small child, walking around with a small smoking stick in his hand, but the stick was not on fire. He would put the stick into his mouth, as one does a cigarette. If some one was away for the winter, Paul could tell the exact day of the person's return. At the age of four he could predict a thunder-shower. He stopped the flow of blood from a wound and made a small cross to stop the pain. He was doing this until he went into the army. He was a very quiet and different sort of boy. He watched others. He did not play. He stayed close to his mother; he was "Mamma's boy." He went to church every morning.

He bossed his brothers, often making them get up and go to church. He put up an altar in their bedroom, put flowers on it, and made his brothers pray. He served the Mass. When he was seventeen, he enlisted in the army. He said: "I'll fight for my God and my country. I'm ready for heaven any time." He was killed in action.

Those born with a caul are designated *bil wit'pu so*, "born with a veil"; they are not like others. The veil itself is a great medicine.

No one at Tobique mentioned the properties that Europeans commonly attribute to the caul: protection against fire, and death by drowning.<sup>1</sup> If the veil is destroyed, the owner loses the power; one informant deplored her own ignorance which had resulted in her child losing his birthright.

The veiled can foretell the future. They can set a board straight up in the air and climb up and down it. They are not remarkably gifted; a boy born with a caul was a fine artist, but, it was explained, this was due not to the veil but to twinship. Even today such people are regarded as uncanny. "They do no harm," said a woman of forty who does house-work for the nuns, "but a girl born that way should be put in a convent. A boy is not often born veiled, but if there is one, he should be put in a monastery." She then mentioned a married woman born with a caul who has always been more quiet than other people and seldom leaves her house.

Although the power inherent in the caul is believed to be free from evil, nevertheless, because of its strength, anger in its owner may bring unpremeditated harm to another; that is, the witch's bad wish. In fact, the woman who told the following story concerning her daughter referred to her child as a witch:

My daughter was what the Doctor called "mystery-born." You could see her eyes and mouth move inside the veil. I folded the veil, put it away in two envelopes, and kept it for a long time. Finally it was lost or stolen. A thief would use it as medicine. A veil wrapped around a sore arm or wrist will cure it of any ailment.

While I was carrying this child, I felt different than in other pregnancies. I was proud or something. I hated everybody. I vomited at the smell of powder, perfume, toilet soap, or tobacco.

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<sup>1</sup> Micmac have universally adopted these beliefs.

The child's father was a White Man. She, G., was good; better than other children, but "funny." She had a power. I was afraid of her. I hated to punish her, lest the power should injure me. G. could prophesy. She could find lost things in no time.

She washed doll's clothes and hung them to dry on a sunbeam.

She could stick coppers on the window-pane and they would stay there—until you looked at her; then they would fall.

She was four years old when I discovered that she had a secret playmate. I had been napping, and I awoke and saw the child playing tea-party. She filled two cups. An invisible person drank from one cup. She talked to this person.

"Who are you talking to?" I asked.

"To a little girl. My friend."

At the age of five, during an influenza epidemic, she counted thirteen box-cars and called them "coffins." That fall there were thirteen deaths at Tobique.

When she was six, an uncle kicked her. She said, "That toe of his will get it!" After the uncle went up north on a log-drive, the toe became horribly sore and he was compelled to leave the woods. He had to return to get a cure from G.'s family. (Only a witch can cure the results of her curse.) I hid my linament bottle in a hole in my mattress so that he could not be cured—for he had kicked my child. But he found it and was nearly cured. The following fall he injured the knee of that leg. He sent a woman from Oldtown, where he was living, to ask forgiveness so that the leg could heal. G. and I forgave him.

With her first Communion, at the age of twelve, most of the power left. Today she is almost a saint. If she is angry at a person, she can bring revenge on him. I tell her: "Don't hurt anybody *much*."

A more general and diffuse power is felt to be potentially present in all Malecite. They seem to be poor and helpless in contrast with the White Man, but just look what they can do to him, even unconsciously! Four instances which follow were cited by one informant. All are equally characteristic of the Micmac attitude.

(1) There is a place near Princeton, Maine, where many Malecite were killed. Nothing grows there, and all the fish have left. A priest sold out the Indians to the Whites, who surrounded the church during a service. Only one small girl, carrying a baby in her arms, escaped. She wandered in the woods for four days before she found Indians. The Whites wanted the land; but no one could live there. Only bushes grow on it now.

(2) Every time the Whites refused to allow an Indian to stay at their house, they had bad luck. One cold night a Mr. Miller refused my brother Billy lunch and lodging. My brother made a fire and camped in a pasture. A log-boss arrived at Miller's and asked, "Why is Billy outside? If Billy isn't welcome to have a bed here, me and my men won't come back here." This was in the spring. In the autumn, Billy greeted Miller on a train.

Miller said: "My house, my barn, and all my pigs and hens burned up. I had no insurance." In his heart Billy was glad. (And, by implication, not surprised.)

(3) A man and his son were refused a room at a hotel near Tobique Reserve. They went to an old deserted Indian house. It was too cold to sleep there. The hotel burned flat to the ground. It was the same with the Campbellton and the Miramichi fires. At Miramichi they wanted to kill two Indians. Fire came from the sky and went four feet into the ground. No Indian was killed. At Campbellton three basket-sellers were refused lodging on a rainy night. They were allowed to stay in the railroad station. Fire came that day, and only the station was saved. The women must have put a curse on the town.<sup>1</sup>

(4) This is true. (Meaning, I know this from personal experience.)

The informant and her husband were cutting ash for baskets. A farmer saw them and charged them three dollars a stick. She said: "Let's go." They left. The farmer had a wife, "good-looking, like a doll." That summer she left him; and a year later, he lost his farm. It had happened, though the two Malecite had not deliberately wished him ill. "Nowadays," added the informant, "Indians can stay in hotels. White people are jealous because the Indians do not pay taxes and get free medical care. But our family have close White friends that we visit, especially in Maine."

The power of prophecy was formerly not limited to witches. The old people—grandparents of the present-day grandparents—knew all about the future, which is now the present. A man seventy-three years of age said that when he was a small boy his grandfather told him the time would come when people would fight in the air and under water. "Now, how was he able to know that?"

A woman stated that long ago a Malecite man had predicted automobiles, submarines, and airplanes; he said there would be fighting in the air and under water. According to a third informant (aged seventy-three) in her grandfather's time people said: "There will be lights all over everywhere, and there will be wonders; and after that we don't know how it will be." "And," she added, "that's how it is now. We've got wonders—radios and television, and lights on cars and planes. We don't know what will come next."

#### *Omens and Signs*

Involuntary movements of the body which had interest for the group of four women informants as omens, were the following: ringing in the right ear: a friend is talking about you; in the left ear: an enemy is talking about you. Quivering between eye-brow and eye-lid, either right or left,

<sup>1</sup> The Miramichi fire of 1825 receives a variety of similar explanations in the tales of the Micmac, natives of the area. The depths of its descent into the ground is more moderately stated as seven inches.

Micmac from Restigouche, across the river from Campbellton, and others throughout New Brunswick, tell comparable stories about the fire which devastated the city in 1910. Wallis, *Micmac*, 476-80, 490.

something will make you glad; quivering of the nose: death; chin: drunkenness; mouth: trouble; in the leg: a stranger will come. Itching: of the right hand, you will shake hands with some one; of the left hand, you will receive money; of the sole of the foot, you will go somewhere.

Sneezing means merely that some one is coming down with a cold, though they had heard a rhyme beginning, "Sneeze on Monday, sneeze for a stranger." Yawning means that the person is tired. The women also repeated a few signs of obviously European origin: If you stumble over something, "Kiss your thumb, He'll surely come." Finding an open safety-pin on a path indicates that you have an enemy; finding a closed one, indicates that a stranger will come. If while drinking tea, a leaf sticks in your teeth, put it on the door; the first boy who comes after that will be your boy-friend. If you find a horse-shoe, count the nails in it; it will give good luck for that number of years.

### *Good Luck from Natural Objects*

The concept of magical good luck which comes to the finder of natural objects of unusual form was probably never so important to Malecite as it was to Micmac;<sup>1</sup> Speck found the Penobscot equivalent of *keskamzit* weaker and less personal than that of the Micmac. No informant spontaneously

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<sup>1</sup> Wallis, 163-166, 301-302, 392-394.



Mrs. William Saulis  
and  
her grandchildren,  
the Nicolas girls

offered any account of it. Direct inquiry elicited only the following: People sometimes see things in driftwood which bring good luck. They take these curiosities home and use them as playthings. After a storm, a little man, a human dwarf, picked up a piece of ice (hailstone) and found in it a square thing that resembled glass. It was a pretty stone. His father-in-law sold it and gave nothing to the finder. When the father-in-law returned from selling things in Fort Fairfield, he brought with him a horse and wagon. He had never before had money. His luck must have come from that stone which fell down during a hailstorm.

### *Supernatural Beings*

Supernatural beings probably once strolled as freely about Tobique Reserve as they did through the minds of Micmac and Penobscot, but today few of them are prominent in Malecite consciousness.

Headless giants are sometimes seen on the road after midnight. Sometimes they venture near persons. Once when a Malecite asked, "What are you doing here?" the giant did not answer and did not move, but like all other giants he did no harm.

Tiny people—dwarfs—enter homes and seat themselves, but never speak. Malecite are usually so surprised at seeing them that they become speechless. They do no harm, but they give no help. After a while they get up and leave. They look like old men. Once three of them came in a group. No one knew where their home was. A few years ago they were seen walking on the road in the daytime. Another informant said they walked only after midnight.

Of the fabulous water monster which has interested students of Malecite and Micmac, we obtained a single account:

A man had a new gun. With his wife he went to sea to hunt porpoise. He dropped the gun in the water. Suddenly an alligator rose out of the water, with the gun across its head. His wife began to cry. He said to her, "Be ready to grab." She was too scared to grab the gun. The alligator rose three or four times, but as each time she was too frightened to grab, they lost the gun.

Mrs. C. N. attributed this adventure to her great-grandfather, a witch. The "alligator" is probably the water monster *wi wil a me mehkw*, whose name, according to E. T. Adney (MS.), is nowadays translated as crocodile or alligator. Rand describes the Micmac *tcipitcka'am* or *checlechicalm*, as "a huge horned serpent or dragon, wanting only the wings to be our fabulous dragon," and says it is the "tutelary deity" of a *buoin* (witch), who uses its red and yellow horns.<sup>1</sup> Thompson identifies the three Rand tales about this creature as European. Marius Barbeau states that the monsters are not French-Canadian. Belief in a giant serpent is so widespread throughout the world that it is impossible to conclude whether or not the Malecite and Micmac lacked the concept before the coming of the Whites.

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<sup>1</sup> Rand, *Legends*, 53; Wallis, *Micmac* 114, 345-47.

A large phantom dog, called "Indian Devil," sometimes goes through the Tobique Reserve. Micmac use this term and concept for *gigwa'dju*, the wolverine.<sup>1</sup>

Supernaturals of present importance are ghosts and the Devil. *Gäs'top* connotes phosphorescence, the jack o' lantern or will o' the wisp, and also ghost; this is the equivalent of the Micmac *skadegamutc*. A woman narrated the following:

"While my father was coming out of the woods from hunting, a big will o' the wisp was in the path. He could not pass it. He stayed there for two hours. It was bad luck to go past it. A week after he arrived home, he died."

"An old man was living by himself in the woods. People brought a corpse home, at night, using lanterns. He heard 'sshu,' looked up, and saw a large jack o' lantern. He said: 'I was frightened and ran.' " Another informant insisted that "the light seen on old trees is just natural."

One said: "A certain fungus growth is called by the same term as the will o' the wisp and a ghost. If a will o' the wisp is seen to rise three times in the woods, money is buried at that place. Every seven years it must show by some sign where the money is buried. The one who digs it up may hear many noises but must not talk back. Use a three-branched stick to dig for it.

"This is money which the forefathers of the present-day Malecite buried. When they hunted, they found silver, could not carry it about, and buried it. They killed a dog or some other animal, buried it with the money, and told it to guard the money. Sometimes they gave these instructions to a serpent. The animal's spirit will keep people away."<sup>2</sup>

Ghosts which appear in customary European guise are usually dead relatives asking for prayers (to lay them at rest?). Two informants thus described them: "A visiting ghost is always the spirit of a relative. It appears as a blur, and one can not recognize its identity. Sometimes people see them outside. Seeing a ghost is a warning of a death. A husband died. His ghost came to the bed of his wife and bit her thumb. This was a warning that she would die. There are ghosts out-of-doors. They are close to the ground, but their feet do not touch the ground. They are dressed in a veil, from head to foot. The face is covered. My son-in-law and other persons have seen them; but I have never seen one." If an unknown ghost stands in your path, do not run away, and it will not chase you.

The Malecite *gäs'top* is overshadowed nowadays by the Devil, who goes around at night looking for bad people. An informant described his father's personal encounter:

<sup>1</sup> Wallis, *Micmac*, 112, 151-3, 302-3, 368-75.

<sup>2</sup> In Dallas County, Missouri, a light, said to have hovered for years over marshy ground on a hill, was believed a sign of buried treasure; when digging brought no gold, other supernatural reasons were substituted. This was post-Civil War. William W. Newell, "The Ignus Fatuus," *Journal of American Folklore*, 17: 60, 1904.

My father and an uncle, when they were boys, were gambling at a house. On the way home they went past a hollow. There they saw a man lying down, eyes shining, his hand on his cheek, gazing directly at them. My father was frightened; my uncle was not. They went into their house and told their mother. She said it was the Devil.

We heard also a version of a well-known French-Canadian tale, placed in the city of Moncton, N.B., in the year 1952-53:

In Moncton, this winter (1952-53), a nicely dressed man came into the dance-hall, danced with a girl, and later they saw finger-prints on her back where his hands had burned into her flesh. The girl had wished that some one would take her for a walk. She was wearing her mother's wedding-ring.

On the way out of the hall, the man said: "Why don't you take that ring off and throw it away?"

"I can't; it was my mother's wedding-ring."

They danced.

Every time he went near a certain baby there, the baby cried. The girl knew then that there was something wrong about the man. She sent for a priest. The priest talked to her partner and said he was the Devil. The Devil said: "If I leave, I will take this girl." He went out, took hold of the door, and the entire side of the hall blew out. People have fixed it several times; but the next time they look at it, it is the same as it was before they fixed it.

This is essentially "Le Diable à La Danse," a story current throughout the St. Lawrence region.<sup>1</sup> A lively version, located in a dance-hall near Phillipsburg, Quebec, where the Devil's footprints burned the floor, was current in northern Vermont in 1946. It is the subject of a popular novel by Philippe-Aubert de Gaspé, first published in 1837, who attributed the tale to a farmer living near Montreal. He omits the incident of the infant who unmasked the Devil.<sup>2</sup>

### *Dreams*

Malecite believe that some dreams, but not all, come true.

*Ni'ka skam*, a nightmare, often is interpreted. For *kō'nē*, the day-dream, no explanation was proffered. A dream about a dead person has the same significance as the appearance of his ghost; you should pray for him; he needs your prayers. Certain motives convey the same meaning to all dreamers: dirty water means sickness; clear water, no meaning; white clothes being washed, or drying on a line, death; a marriage, a death; a death, a marriage; a graveyard, death of a close relative; blood, good luck. A black

<sup>1</sup> C. M. Barbeau, "Anecdotes et Dictons Populaires du Canada," *Journal of American Folklore*, 32: 273-78, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> Herbert Larue, in *Bulletin des Researches Historiques*, 5; 100-04, 1899. Later editions of the novel appeared in 1864 and 1878. The tale is published in *La Repertoire National*, 2: 25-33, Montreal, 1893.

horse seen in a dream is an enemy, probably a witch in animal form. Dreams recalled by informants, given here, contain evident allusions to Malecite culture.

I dreamed that I was on top of a mountain. A girl was with me. She told me to jump off the cliff into the water, and I would become a nurse. I jumped into the water. It was dirty water.<sup>1</sup>

When I awoke, I knew that something [untoward] would happen. Later I was ill.

Another woman related: My mother dreamed that war was coming to this Reserve. People were lying about dead. Soon after she had this dream, the influenza epidemic arrived. A saintly woman came from above (an angel?), took my mother to a pool, and told her to drink of it. She did not drink of it, and died that fall. Those whom she had dreamed of seeing dead died later of the influenza.

A man, seventy-three years of age, while in a hospital a short time previously, dreamed that he made a man out of a paper bag, complete, including hand and fingers, but could not get the hand to function. He had intended to have this manikin reach into the box which contained the money offerings and take out the money. Several times the dream recurred, always with the same ending. He seldom dreamed; and this dream did not recur after he left the hospital.

A woman about thirty-five years of age, unmarried, related the following dreams:

(1) I dreamed that a black horse was chasing me wherever I went. I went into a boat; the sailors on it were dressed in white. They asked me what I was afraid of. I told them a horse was pursuing me. They put me into a box and piled lumber over it. When I awoke, it was pitch dark. I put my hand up, and felt boards. I put my right hand down, and there were boards. I called to my mother. She came with holy water and blessed me. My enemy was (a specified person) who had quarrelled with me that week.

(2) When I was a little girl, my mother and I used to quarrel. I dreamed that I packed my clothes and went out. I walked downstairs in my sleep. My mother asked what was the trouble. Two or three weeks later, she missed things. I looked in my pillow-case, and those things were there.

(3) I dreamed about a dragon. I used to like devilled ham. My mother told me not to eat meat at night. I opened a can of devilled ham, made a sandwich with the meat, and ate it. I dreamed that the Devil came; his eyes were balls of fire.

My mother caught hold of me and asked, "What is the matter?"

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<sup>1</sup>The profession of nursing has long been an ideal held before girls by government officials and by Sisters of Charity. Until recently it was a dream impossible to realize because, according to a Sister at Tobique, no New Brunswick hospital would accept an Indian girl for training as a nurse or as a nurse's aid. Today, however, Malecite are in training at St. Basile.

I said, "The Devil is in my bed." I would not sleep there the remainder of the night, but went into another bed.

(4) I dreamed about dirty water, and was sick all winter.

## MYTHS AND TRADITIONS

The tales that Mechling, in 1910, and Speck, in 1915, recorded at Tobique show a much stronger affiliation with Penobscot than with Micmac legend. The scraps that remain today indicate the same relationship with the culture common to all the Abenaki. In the single fragment of a myth concerning Gluskap (the culture hero), his brother Mikumwes is equally important and active as a transformer of the earth:

A woman and her two sons came to St. John in a canoe. While they were trying to kill beaver, one of the men threw a rock from St. John to Tobique. This man was Gluskap. The rock is now called Tobique Rock. The other man was Mikumwes; he threw a rock to kill a moose; and the moose is here today, as a rock. They were the first Indians to arrive at St. John.

Gluskap will not soon disappear from New Brunswick, for the Whites have taken him up. The legend of his destruction of a mammoth beaver-dam that closed the entrance of the St. John River into the Bay of Fundy, graces literature prepared for the tourist trade, and Malecite children with modern or forgetful parents can learn it from their school books.<sup>1</sup>

Another tale, now circulated via the same media, is about the Malecite heroine who treacherously guided raiding Iroquois to their death over Grand Falls, in the St. John River. Shove published the story in 1851, Rand in 1894, Mechling in 1914. An identical tale from the Cree in the neighbourhood of James Bay was reported by Skinner in 1911.<sup>2</sup> Two of these tales, in summary form, selected from several versions told in 1953, are given below:

(1) A captive Malecite girl jumped out of a canoe on to the ledge above Grand Falls and commanded the Mohawk to go to sleep. There were about a hundred and fifty of them. She sang, and put them to sleep. They went over the falls; and thus she saved the Malecite from attack.

(2) She, too, went over the falls, and was killed. She gave her life for her people. Sometimes her face is seen, under the water, moving up the river. Footprints on the ledge where she landed are visible.

No other Mohawk war stories were recalled at length; one man, however, remembered that a party of Malecite, surrounded by Mohawk, collected the snowshoes of the sleeping enemy, burned them, and then escaped. A victory over Micmac was told at somewhat greater length.

Malecite and Micmac were enemies. At certain times the Malecite were forewarned that their enemies were coming to attack them; a spirit told them. The Malecite were thus prepared for them five or six months in

<sup>1</sup> Lawson and Sweet, *Our New Brunswick Story*.

<sup>2</sup> Alanson Skinner, "Notes on Eastern Cree and Northern Saulteaux," *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*, 1911, 115-116.

advance. When the Micmac drew near, the Malecite lay in wait for them and watched. Sometimes an enemy appeared in the form of a chunk of ice. A certain Malecite gathered oil and fats for five or six months in preparation for the arrival of his enemy. On the night that he expected the enemy to appear he made a great fire in his tent. The enemy had taken the form of ice. All night the Malecite burned his store of wood, fats, and oil, and thus melted the enemy ice. Before dawn the Micmac were vanquished.

Several volunteered the origin of the word "squaw":

A White man was in a store. Two Indian women walked in. One bought groceries; the other waited for her. "Squas," [that is, "wait for me"] the woman said. The Whites misunderstood the word and thought it meant *woman*.

In the Micmac version, the White Man's mistake comes from a woman's greeting, *pis-kwa*, "come in."<sup>1</sup>

Two vague tales seemingly explaining the settling of Tobique were told by an old man:

My grandfather was a fine American, a Penobscot, from Oldtown [Maine]. His son came to Tobique. One time there was a man, his wife, and her sister and brother. The last three were orphans. The husband did not want to take care of his wife's brother and sister, and the couple abandoned them. The children followed the river-bank until they came to their sister's house. They built a dwelling near hers. They lived on broth furnished them by their sister. During the winter they had no meat. In the spring they moved back to Tobique, and thereafter were fat and healthy.

Near here there were about five houses, and times were hard. For that reason, two families moved into the woods. One family consisted of man, wife, and child; the other, of man, wife, and two children. One family kept a cross dog.

Early one morning the people saw someone approaching. The child was frightened; the dog did not bark. The man went to the dwelling and entered it.

He said: "How can you live here? Are there any other people?"  
"Yes."

They understood his speech, but he was a strange kind of man. They told him about their neighbours. He went to them and said: "Go back to the place from which you came. You will have good luck there." They obeyed, and joined the three families which they had left. They had good food and good luck. The man was a good spirit. That was when the Indians first came here.

### THE HISTORY OF THE MALECITE

When we explained to the Indians why we had come to Tobique:  
"We are studying the history of the tribe; we wish to make a record of

<sup>1</sup> Wallis, *Micmac*, 490.

what used to happen—before it is all forgotten,” we received an unexpected answer. William Saulis, chief for the past eighteen years, said that all the history was already written down and published in a book called “The Open Hand.”<sup>1</sup> Several Malecite men told us: “The Chief knows all the history. He can give you the whole thing.” One or two of them mentioned “The Open Hand” but, it seemed, knew the book only by name.

After a dignified delay of some days, Chief Saulis imparted his knowledge:

“All the Indians,” he said, “came to this continent from China. Indians cannot succeed without organization. Organization is necessary everywhere to obtain power. There are thousands and thousands of western Indians, and the two thousand Malecite [actually one thousand] are only a little pebble in the ocean. The original name of the Malecite was *Wi las'took*, which later became *Wu lan'stoock*. Both mean ‘Nice River.’”

“We Malecite don’t follow the old ways here. But—Gluskap is ours! Other people may talk about him; but he belongs to us”.

“The true history of the Malecite,” the Chief continued, “is in ‘The Open Hand.’” He had lost his copy, or given it away.

[He would now tell us what was in it.] “The ‘Open Hand’ was an English general. He came here after Iroquois days. His name was Lieutenant-Colonel-Something-or-Other, and he was at Bangor, or some place like that. When the Micmac set out to attack the White people in Massachusetts, three thousand of them came from the Baie de Chaleur and wanted Malecite, Penobscot, and Passamaquoddy to join them; but the Malecite refused to join them, and to this day the two tribes have kept apart. The name Tobique comes from ‘The Open Hand’. When the Malecite refused to join the Micmac, the greatest warrior among them was Sakilexis. Somewhat later, the Micmac captured the wife and the son of ‘The Open Hand’. Sakilexis, the Malecite, put up a fight for her and the boy. He followed Blacksnake, the Micmac chief. With Sakilexis was his sister’s husband, ‘Tobique’.

“At dusk, they reached the prisoners. The Micmac captors were tired. Sakilexis had the power to make people see what didn’t exist. The woman and boy were tied to a tree, and a guard was walking back and forth. Sakilexis let out a war-whoop and surprised the Micmac. ‘Before you move,’ he shouted, ‘look all around.’ The Micmac, because of his power, saw around them, not trees but Malecite. Sakilexis called to Blacksnake: ‘We’ll fight. The loser will be a prisoner.’ They fought, and Sakilexis killed Blacksnake. Then Sakilexis drew a line on the ground, and said: ‘Whoever crosses this line will feel my tomahawk.’

“He left Tobique to guard the line. Later, the Whites found him there and called the place by his name, Tobique. Others say *Tobique* was a mispronunciation of ‘Toe the mark’ [on the line], but that isn’t true.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Open Hand: An Epic Poem Dealing With the Early Settlement of Maine and New Brunswick, Founded on Tradition*, by W. D. Kearney. First printed at Presque Isle, Me., by W. S. Gilman, reprinted at Hartland, N.B., by Fred H. Stevens, in 1920, and Observer, Ltd., in 1926.

"The next year 'The Open Hand' attacked the Malecite because he thought they had joined the Micmac in raids on Massachusetts. He shot and killed Sakilexis, who was innocent and had saved 'Open Hand's' wife and son. The Malecite warrior was given honourable burial. The 'Open Hand' had made a big mistake."

This story, though interesting tradition, is not history. In the eighteenth century there were never more than a few hundred Micmac at the Baie de Chaleur, and during the war here referred to, they stayed by themselves at Restigouche. It was the other tribes, which Chief Saulis named, who joined with the French against the colonists in New England.

Saulis's tale bears little resemblance to Kearny's clumsy Sir Walter Scott type of "epic." Set during the French and Indian war (1755-63), it states at once that the Malecite had joined with the French against the British. "The Open Hand" is Captain George Millburn, one of Roger's Rangers,

"The sachem of the yankee band  
Who part by presents, part by bribes,  
Has won the hearts of half the tribes.

At various points in his adventures he or other members of his family are saved by individual Indians who act contrary to the policy of the tribe, sometimes with the chief's secret acquiescence.

Mrs. Millburn, her small daughter, young Mrs. Mary Hanson, and a teen-age boy, Edwin Millburn, are taken captive in a raid on a Penobscot River settlement and are carried off to Meductic, an Indian camp and French fort on the St. John. Edwin is about to be burned at the stake, when Soxlixis [sic], a noted warrior but not yet a chief, begs that the boy be spared to become his adopted son. All Indians agree except Edwin's captor, Blacksnake, who is forced to yield. The women also are spared, because otherwise, Edwin says, he would die of grief. Some months later Soxlixis, leading a raiding party, fights with George Millburn and a group of hunters. Hearing Millburn's name, he spares him and the other Whites, because Millburn is Edwin's father, and nurses him back to health but does not reveal the fate of Edwin and the women.

Before Soxlixis returns to Meductic, Quebec falls; and a French villain, together with Blacksnake and a Micmac friend, leave the fort and take with them the captive women and child.

Soxlixis returns, and with his brother, Menona, and Edwin, he pursues Blacksnake's party and overtakes them. Blacksnake has killed the Millburn child. When the Frenchman is about to rape Mary Hanson, and Blacksnake about to kill Mrs. Millburn, Edwin knifes the Frenchman, Soxlixis slays Blacksnake, and Menona wounds the Micmac. The villains are buried on top of one another, the Micmac is sent back to his tribe, and the women are again taken to Meductic, where Soxlixis tells Mrs. Millburn that Edwin will some day reign as chief. In fear of losing Edwin, he does not tell her that her husband, "The Open Hand," is still alive. At the fort everyone prepares for the wedding of Chief Peter Bear's daughter to a French ensign. When, after the feast, all are drunk—except, of course,

Soxlixus—Roger's Rangers fall upon the fort and kill men, women, and children. Soxlixus hears the Rangers, gives the Malecite war-cry, and rushes to rouse Edwin and his mother. At their door a Ranger's bullet kills him.

The fort surrenders. Captain Millburn, "The Open Hand," is united with his family. Edwin, glad to see his father, sorrows for his dead foster-father. Soxlixus, wrapped in bark supplied by Edwin, is laid in his grave by "The Open Hand."

The affirmation by Malecite and Whites that Sakilexis was a great traditional hero is possibly the principal point of interest. In 1910 the intrusion of his name instead of Gluskap's in a tale belonging to that cycle greatly annoyed Mechling.

The narrator was Frank Francis of Tobique. "I have never met any other Indian," complains Mechling, "who has heard of Sakilexis."<sup>1</sup> It is a pity that he did not inquire further of Mr. Francis, who evidently put a real hero into the wrong tale. Our discovery was made in a library far from Malecite country; let us hope that others will retrieve something more about Sakilexis before it is too late.

## MALECITE AND MICMAC

From the collection of items that make up our present knowledge of the Malecite, it is obvious that the culture was part of the Eastern Algonkin area and almost identical with that of Penobscot and Micmac, between which tribes their territory lies. This likeness holds true equally for aboriginal times, in so far as we can infer them; for the early historic period; and for the past hundred years or more, which to modern Malecite are "the good old days."

In the last-mentioned period the tribes in Maine and New Brunswick had similar contacts with Whites and took over and incorporated much the same French and British traits that today they consider their own. The various tribes differed in the emphasis accorded common native traits and in the adoption of traits from European culture; but from the fragmentary ethnologic information we now have, we cannot identify with confidence the specific characteristics that once may have set the Malecite apart from their neighbours. To this there is one exception: the differences in the respective dialects of Malecite and Micmac are sufficient to establish a feeling, otherwise unjustified, of separateness. Speakers of Micmac and of Malecite are mutually understandable, though not easily; and, it may be, that lack of clarity in a speech so close to their own, spoken by a people whose territory touches theirs, accounts for a situation usually irritating to the Micmac. Whatever the cause, they have long expressed in strong terms their feeling that the tribe on the St. John River uses poor or garbled speech, *mel'a sit*. Those involved have adopted the insult as their name. At Tobique in 1953, the chief, when stating that their name was formerly

<sup>1</sup> Mechling, *Malecite Tales*, 45. The Penobscot Chief elected in 1839 had the family name of Socklexis. Smith, 30.

*Wilastook*, expressed no desire that it be changed to restore their ancient dignity, although some Whites have done so. In the same year Micmac at Big Cove, N.B., gave the old explanation: Malecite were once Micmac who broke away from the tribe; thereafter their language was modified and is now further corrupted by the adoption of many French and English words; the result is gibberish. (Malecite could say the same about Micmac, and probably do, but we did not happen to hear them.) Other Micmac knew so little about old sentiments that they classified the Malecite as an Iroquois group, although certain words in their language were recognized as identical with Micmac.

In addition to "Poor Speakers," Micmac hurled another unpleasant name to the westward: *Kahusweskeeteheenoouk*, "Muskrat People," which carries the double insult of eating a despised animal and of being "very small game." Malecite from the days of John Gyles to our own have been enthusiastic consumers of muskrat; Micmac reject it.<sup>1</sup>

Malecite retorted with *Mahtawesweskeeteheenoouk*, "Porcupine People," which refers to Micmac diet and to what they considered the Micmac's excessive interest in porcupine quillwork. Although the Malecite were a smaller tribe, the tale given on pages 42-43 suggests that they possessed a power strong enough to beat the Micmac. That is news to the Micmac, who claim that they have never fought the Malecite, who were always a small tribe and liked to live close to big protecting neighbours.<sup>2</sup>

Actually, as we have indicated above, the two fought frequently, sometimes as enemies, sometimes as allies against the Iroquois or, later, the Whites. Today one gets the impression of slight contacts between the two groups. There are few Micmac spouses among Malecite; extra-tribal marriage has been mainly with Penobscot (earlier, with Huron), and social and economic interest is oriented toward tribes and White industries in New England. Only one Micmac in 1953 spoke spontaneously of Malecite: a woman in telling of her daughter's marriage to the son of a Malecite witch. Another woman on learning of our visit to Tobique said: "The Malecite hate the Micmac. If you went to them starving, they wouldn't give you a piece of bread"; and then added the qualification, "some are nice people," and "the really bad ones are the Passamaquoddy." Malecite, when informed that we were acquainted with Micmac, said nothing.

Of the annual meetings with Micmac—and also with Penobscot—to "establish relations for the public weal . . . and to prevent collision in hunting and fishing,"<sup>3</sup> we heard nothing from either Micmac or Malecite informants. The boundary between their hunting territories seems to have been at certain points vague enough to cause dispute. In Levinge's words it sounds clear: "such a line as will separate the waters flowing eastward

<sup>1</sup> Chamberlain, 1898; Wallis, 277.

<sup>2</sup> Wallis, 448.

<sup>3</sup> Gesner. He writes in 1847 that meetings were held annually at Point Pleasant, Maine, in Passamaquoddy territory.

into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, from those which flow westwardly into the river St. John."<sup>1</sup> Speck's account, based on Ganong and Webster, shows that doubtful spots existed. At the southeast, the Malecite frontier began fifty miles east of the present city of St. John at approximately the present town of Salmon River and ran north from that point for seventy-five miles, following "the heads of rivers draining into the Petitcodiac and those flowing eastward into Northumberland Strait." The line crossed the Salmon River and then turned westward to the headwaters of the southwest Miramichi and within fifteen miles of the St. John River. It then bent northeastward, "following the divide of waters flowing by way of the Tobique into the St. John, and east [toward] Miramichi Bay until it reached the headwaters and basin of the Nipisiguit River. From there it went westward . . . nearly to St. John . . . at the source of the Restigouche River above Grand Falls. The boundary line then turned northwestward toward the Province of Quebec to the St. Lawrence in a direction not specifically indicated by Ganong and Webster. Malecite residents and wanderers extended their range over the Temiscouata River region to Riviere du Loup on the St. Lawrence and . . . beyond as far as Rimouski in the late historic period."<sup>2</sup> In effect, Micmac hunting territory cut a big wedge out of the Malecite region, with the sharp point at the east between Nipisiguit and Nestor lakes, which narrowed the Malecite territory on the west to less than fifty miles on both sides of the St. John between the forty-sixth and forty-seventh degrees of latitude, or from near Benton on the south to Grand Falls on the north.

Over such a boundary, disputes must often have arisen, resulting in war raids, such as Maillard's informants described in 1755. Maillard, who knew both tribes, said of them: "The Micmakis and Mariquects . . . though different in language, have the same manners and customs, and are of the same way of thinking and acting."<sup>3</sup>

From the ethnologic information regarding the two groups—Malecite at Tobique and Micmac on all reserves in New Brunswick and parts of Nova Scotia—we might consider this likeness in three periods of time: in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; in the old-time culture described by our informants; and briefly as we saw it functioning in 1953. Malecite economic life in the seventeenth century followed the seasonal pattern of the Micmac. During the winter they wandered in small family bands in the interior of the country hunting animals for food; in the summer they returned to more or less permanent settlements on the banks of the St. John and its tributaries. There they fished and, unlike the Micmac, raised corn and pumpkins. There is no reference to the pursuit of the large sea mammals that engaged the Micmac; still the Passamaquoddy were said to be the coast-dwelling branch of the Malecite. The earliest Malecite canoe known by us (1800) resembled in outline the Penobscot rather than the Micmac model.

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<sup>1</sup> Levinge, 100-102.

<sup>2</sup> Speck, 1946, 362.

<sup>3</sup> Maillard, pp. 18-33.

Successful aboriginal methods of treating wounds and frozen limbs with turpentine, the game of *altestagan* with its power invested bowl, the prominent rôle of women in the torture of war captives, and the probationary year for a bridegroom, are all traits common to the two tribes. John Gyles mentions that muskrat were eaten by Malecite (1689); present-day Micmac state that they themselves were never fond of muskrat.<sup>1</sup>

The tale of the young lady too fine for any mortal suitor, who married "one of those kind spirits who inhabit the Teddon," set down by Gyles, has no seventeenth century documentation for Micmac. In this early version of the M. Katahdin story, the girl's parents see her and "a beautiful youth" swimming in the headwaters of the Penobscot River below the mountain, and call upon their supernatural son-in-law to supply them with game that is their due. Thereafter, "if they did but go to the water side and signify their desire, the animal would come swimming to them." Two hundred years later, Micmac at Burnt Church, on the Miramichi Bay, told about a girl from their settlement taken from her father's canoe by a lover from "Halfway," a merman, who in subsequent autumns left on the shore a winter's supply of seal and tuna to feed his father-in-law.<sup>2</sup>

In presenting the material that Tobique informants considered to be old-time Malecite culture, there are frequent comparisons with similar phases of Micmac custom and belief. The likenesses are equally close whether the trait offered as Malecite is obviously of French or British origin or both or is clearly native. Respect for animals; specific pregnancy taboos; the feeding of colostrum to the newborn; beliefs in the source, form, and behaviour of will-o'-the-wisp; adoption of European ideas of witchcraft; faith in or hope of supernatural retribution visited on Whites who harm Indians; and the power of those born with a caul, are still topics of sufficient interest to be introduced spontaneously by Malecite and Micmac. Not all of these beliefs were admittedly current in 1953.

As the Malecite survey comprised only a ten-day visit to one reserve, whereas the Micmac survey extended in time from 1911 to 1953, and in space from Restigouche, Que., to Pictou, N.S., and included all New Brunswick reserves, an inter-tribal comparison of the degrees of intensity of interest in a particular phase cannot be attempted; nor can one safely conclude without further field work among Malecite that topics and variants not found at Tobique do not characterize Malecite culture. Two points, however, that deserve later amplification by anthropologists, may be made.

The first concerns the Malecite concept of twins and the benign power inherent in the second-born. Among Micmac we have only the negative statement of an informant in 1911: one twin is sure to turn out badly. In 1950 and again in 1953 we repeatedly interviewed a Micmac mother of twins who regarded them with intense pride because she had been unique in raising both, but spoke of them in a manner freer from the folklore of twinship than one might find in a well-educated White woman in a similar

<sup>1</sup> Wallis, 277.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 351-54.

position. When they were newborns, she liked to hold them in her arms "because they felt like two dolls"; when they were three years, the boy was in her eyes merely the youngest of her four sons, while the girl was kept with her and guarded as a little daughter should be. Nor did old people on the Reserve refer to the twins except to remark occasionally that it was unusual for both twins to survive.

The second point of difference is the far greater intrusion of Roman Catholic features in the folk-medicine of Tobique than we found at any Micmac Reserve. However, this is a matter of degree rather than of kind; an indication primarily of the amount of acculturation.

Culture loss and culture changes among Micmac in the forty years between 1911 and 1950 have been observed and recorded incidental to our ethnologic study.<sup>1</sup> At Tobique, talks with officials of the Indian Affairs Branch and with Sisters of Charity, and the reading of brief government reports, supplemented our superficial impressions of the amount and kind of acculturation. All these sources indicate that change from tribal to White Canadian ways has taken place in much the same manner as on the more advanced Micmac Reserves, but on the whole has progressed somewhat further. The main forces in each tribe have been (1) increased education, which has enabled the Indian to participate in the lower levels of the Whites' economic world; and (2) the two world wars, which have widened the horizons and altered the contacts of many Micmac and Malecite men. Indian families throughout the Maritime Provinces, unable to find steady employment on or near their Reserve, go regularly to Maine for seasonal work in the potato industry; to factories in New York or New England in winter time; or to construction jobs at a nearby United States Air Base in the summer.

If our impressions of greater adaptation to the Whites' social world at Tobique are correct, it can be ascribed in large part to the steady influence of the resident Roman Catholic missionaries during the past twenty years, with their school and hospital, and to the geographic position of the Reserve in relation to sources of employment. In the summer of 1953, six or more men went by truck each day to work at the Air Base in Limestone, Maine; a number were employed in the factories of Bridgeport, Connecticut; others were in the Armed Forces. Few were skilled workmen, and most of them depended on seasonal jobs: at the Reserve, cutting pulp or repairing houses; and in Maine, cutting or picking potatoes during the two annual money-making periods, each lasting from three to four weeks. Micmac are engaged mainly for the autumn harvest.

#### PRESENT STATUS OF THE MALECITE

In the summer of 1953, many Tobique Malecite were earning eight or nine dollars a day, high wages for unskilled residents of New Brunswick, White or Indian. Children as young as fourteen were said to receive the

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<sup>1</sup> Wallis, *Micmac*, 270-309; "Culture Loss and Culture Change," 1953.

same pay as adults for cutting seed potatoes and pulling mustard in the fields. But this was a temporary prosperity. In the following March, the annual Indian Affairs report stated that with a deterioration of the New Brunswick economic situation in the latter months of 1953, the unskilled Indians were greatly affected, and the better incomes were derived from construction jobs across the border, such as that at Limestone, which employed some Tobique men.

The hopeful situation at Tobique is the comparatively large number of young people who are continuing education beyond the eighth-grade day school. In 1953 fourteen attended schools away from the Reserve; the boys at collegiate schools in Antigonish, St. Thomas, and Chatham; the girls at the convent in Newcastle and the school and hospital in St. Basile. One boy had completed his first year at the provincial university. Families were proud of these children: to refer to a grandson as "that college boy" was a pleasure frequently indulged in by two old women informants. All advanced school attendance is of recent date. Twenty years ago no New Brunswick hospital would accept an Indian girl for training, even as a nurse's aid, nor might girls live in a convent while receiving training in any field. A capable woman now about forty scored 90.5 in the provincial examination on completing the eighth grade at Tobique, but there her education had to end. Another woman of the same age and experience is now the mother of a University student of engineering, a boy at St. Thomas Collegiate, and a girl who is a graduate nurse.

The first 'all Indian' Girl Guides Troop in Canada is claimed by Tobique. Under the leadership of one of our informants, this troop made an appearance early in its career as ushers for a war benefit at a cinema near the Reserve. Its existence and much of the impetus to advanced education can be credited to a Sister of Charity, who has spent the past twenty years among the Malecite. In 1936 when she first came among them at the Fredericton Reserve, people were unkempt and dirty. Haircuts were few, faces were dirty, and clothes were in need of repair. At church the Whites insisted on segregation. When the Indians complained, the Sister told them, "Clean up, so that people will be willing to sit in a pew with you." A year later, she said, everyone had "best clothes" and haircuts; there were even curls.

At Tobique, backward conditions were prolonged by isolation, which existed until the road across the new dam was built (the hydro-electric project was completed in 1953). Before that, even Perth was hard to reach; mail was brought by canoe from Plaster Rock. The leader of the Girl Guides, now about thirty-five, said: "When I was a kid there was no paint, paper, or blinds in the houses. We put newspapers on the walls and between our bed blankets to keep out the winter cold. We didn't even have brushes or brooms. We scrubbed the floors and windows with rough black spruce and cedar limbs."

After a very slow start the Malecite have moved quickly toward complete acceptance of Canadian ways of life. In 1851 Shove<sup>1</sup> said of

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<sup>1</sup> Shove, p. 97.

the Tobique people: "They talk English well and fluently and have hardly more, if as much, of the savage as the peasantry in some of the remote parts of England, and still more of Ireland." Today, the most casual observer driving between the Reserve and the town of Perth will see White families living at a standard far below that of the Malecite. Nevertheless, the attitudes peculiar to a long history of wardship still draw the line between Indian and White. A young man will give up a steady job in the States to return to uncertain casual labour on the Reserve, if by so doing he can keep title to his \$2,400 Veteran's house. A girl, knowing enough about White life to plan for a career in commercial art, will ask: "But if I do this, will it mean enfranchisement?" There may not be much to lose, but the Malecite intend to hang on to that bit.

To return once more to Shove. A hundred years ago, his two Malecite guides entertained him by "singing French songs in duet, talks about hunting, gossip, and old wars, and complaining of the usage of the Indians in this province." The last-named topic is still current.



New  
houses  
at  
Tobique

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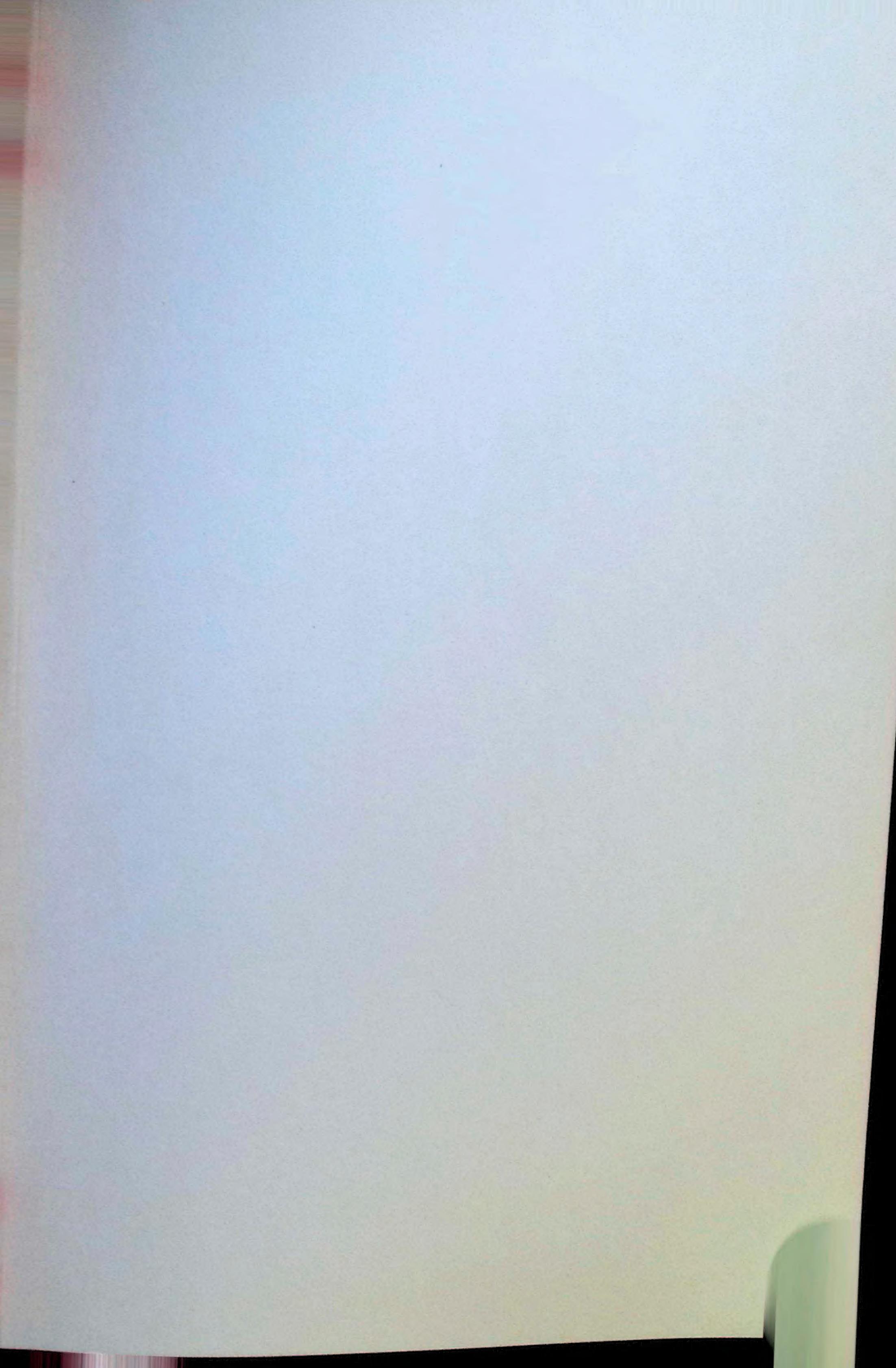


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